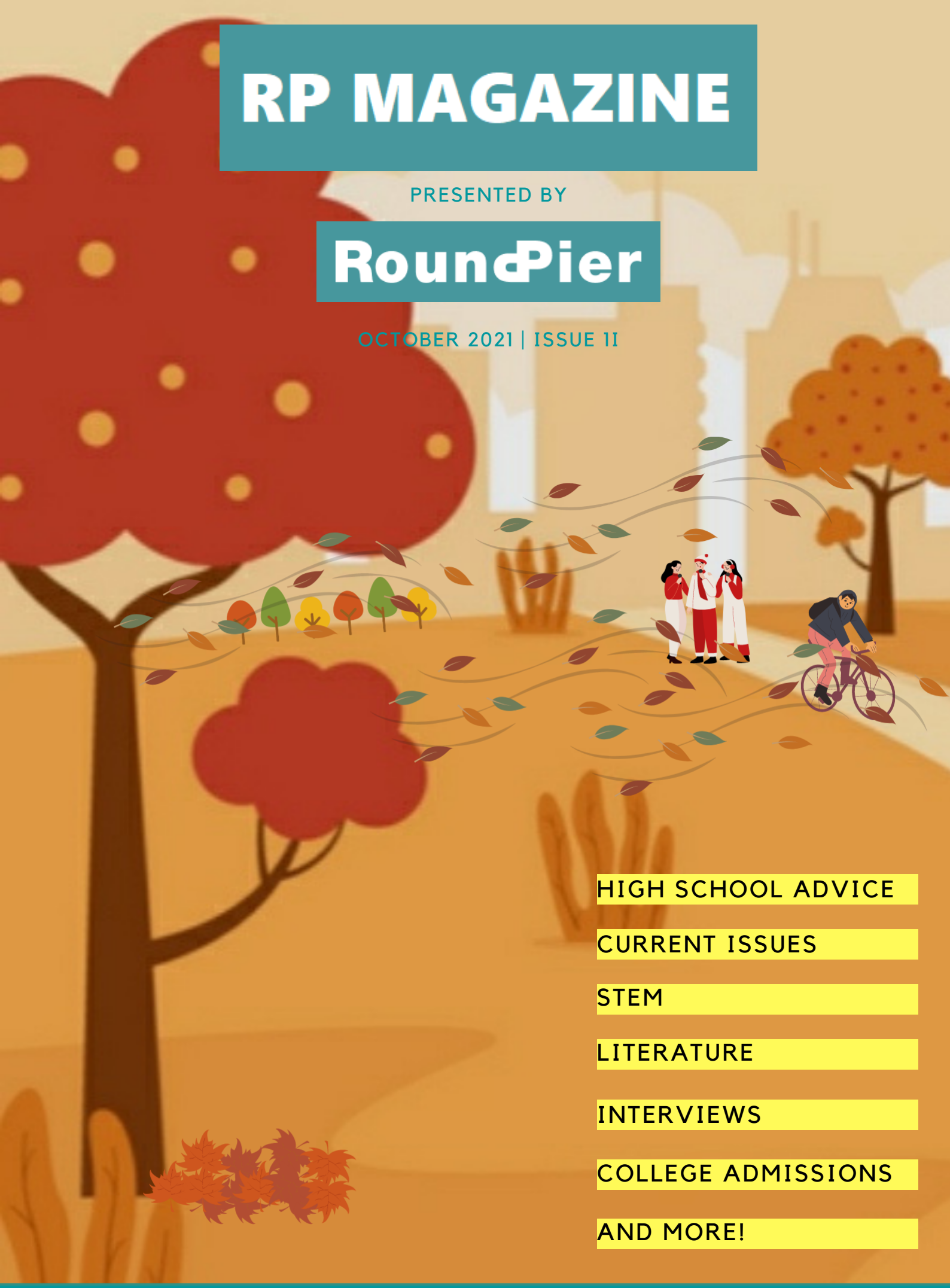
RP MAGAZINE

PRESENTED BY

RoundPier

OCTOBER 2021 | ISSUE 11



HIGH SCHOOL ADVICE

CURRENT ISSUES

STEM

LITERATURE

INTERVIEWS

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

AND MORE!

Illustrated by: Pratyus Sen Gupta

RoundPier

RoundPier is a dedicated community for students, parents, teachers and various other education professionals and organizations. It is an educational social network focused on academic and extra-curricular activities. RoundPier is not a facilitation tool or a management system intended for classroom use. This platform focuses on learning and development helping members grow while being part of a global education community.

We believe in the power of learning from others. As students, we are eager to participate in opportunities to grow and achieve our goals. As parents, we labor over finding the right academic and extracurricular activities, programs, and organizations for our children. We originally thought about how helpful it would be if a place existed where we could see what others were doing and interact in a community of students, parents, teachers, tutors, and other stakeholders in the academic and extra-curricular hemisphere. This became the inspiration for RoundPier.

As RoundPier developed, it reaffirmed how students, their parents, educators and other education-related professionals were all experiencing a similar and fundamental problem – the lack of knowing what their peers were successfully doing to grow. Our dream for RoundPier is to be the dedicated community where all can come to connect, share, interact, and learn from one another. We want to eliminate the fear of missing out and increase the hope of better reaching one's full potential.

Is RoundPier safe?

We take safety seriously and strive for a community of trust. There are a number of features built to ensure a safe environment. RoundPier uses human moderation and various verification processes to confirm users are who they represent to be. This is a "Neighborhood Watch" network and RoundPier will act to remove any member that engages in appropriate behavior. There is a private message system in RoundPier. Any private messaging between a student and unverified education professional or organization cannot take place without parental approval.

Who can join RoundPier?

RoundPier is open to people, educational institutions, and extra-curricular programs. Our core people audiences include active students (from pre-school to high school age), parents, teachers, school administrators, tutors, and coaches.

OPPORTUNITIES

APPLY FOR RP MAGAZINE GRAPHIC DESIGN TEAM

APPLY FOR RP MAGAZINE EDITORIAL TEAM

APPLY FOR RP MAGAZINE WRITING TEAM

EDITOR'S LETTER

From Ada:

The RoundPier magazine started off as a summer project but over time it has culminated into something much more. I have been very grateful to have a team I can trust. It is always a pleasure to work with my co-founder Ana. I used to think that leading a team with someone else would be messy, full of conflicts and confusion. Fortunately, we compliment each other's skill sets. Her organization skills match with my spontaneous creative side and together we are able to form a team that our members can rely on.

If you would have asked me a few months ago if I was a team member, I would have probably said no. For I was always used to working alone and my school system never encouraged collaboration. The magazine has led me to believe that when passionate people come on board, no matter their background, beautiful things happen. It has taught me patience to trust other people so that they can have a chance to truly shine.

This team has taught me to always keep the goal of our project first and foremost before any personal wishes.
Our team of writers, editors and graphic designers come from all over the world. Even though we have never met, we work hard to adhere to the deadlines so as to make the publication process easier for the other members. The RoundPier Team has been exceptionally kind and supporting. I would like to give special thanks to Greg, Zita and Alison from the RSIP Program. I know how hard it is to let someone you have not known before to represent your efforts and I feel very grateful that they have given us a chance to represent the RoundPier community.

I would also like to thank Avishi for managing the layout and it is always a pleasure to design with her. We have truly put in our best efforts to make the reading experience for you, yes you the reader, better and soothing.
Special thanks to Pratyus and Divyanshi for designing the Section Covers.

I can see that we have grown so much since the last time, in terms of design, content and I can surely say that we will continue to do so because I believe in us.
The RoundPier Magazine is always open for collaboration. If you have anything you would like to say, feel free to contact us at roundpiermagazine@gmail.com.
See you next time!

From Ana:

It's a weird feeling coming into the second edition of RP Magazine. Having already established a base last time, but at the same time having to shake everything up, so we can learn from our past mistakes; it was the same and entirely different, no matter how contradictory that phrase might be.

Even though like any project not everything went to plan, the art of working as a team and getting into a pattern between everyone has made this function more smoothly than I could have imagined at the start. Even though everyone lives in different parts of the globe, might not know anything about each other, and come from extremely different backgrounds, we came together to make this happen and become a reality for the second time in a row, and hopefully for many more.

There is nothing but gratitude for everyone that put their grain of salt to make this edition what it has become. From the fifteen writers that put their pen to paper to express what they thought or wanted to express, to the six editors that made sure every detail went according to plan, to the graphic design team that made the illustrations that make the magazine come alive, and to Avishi our Layout Director that was the reason every little piece could come together and gave her all at every stage of the process.

Doing this project for RoundPier has been an honor, as it's a platform for youth like us to fulfill their dreams in the future. Zita, Greg, and the RoundPier team members that gave a hand in making this possible are not only motivated to make everything work out, but they give it their all every time I hear from them, so it couldn't have been possible without them.

Finally, to everyone that took the time to read this, thank you for showing interest in this project done by students all over the world. Hopefully, if we learn something from this is that no matter the borders, humans will be able to cooperate between each other and be friends, to create amazing things like this.

act as if what you do makes a difference

IT DOES.

William James

Illustrated by Ada Choudhry

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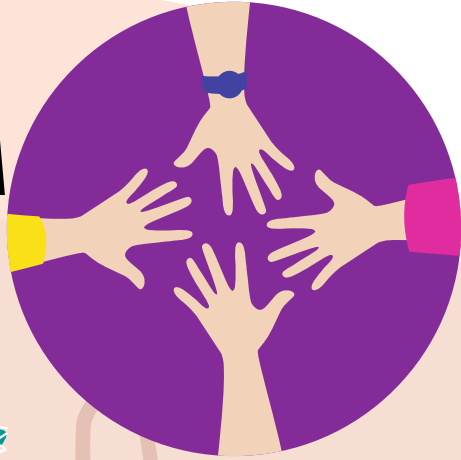

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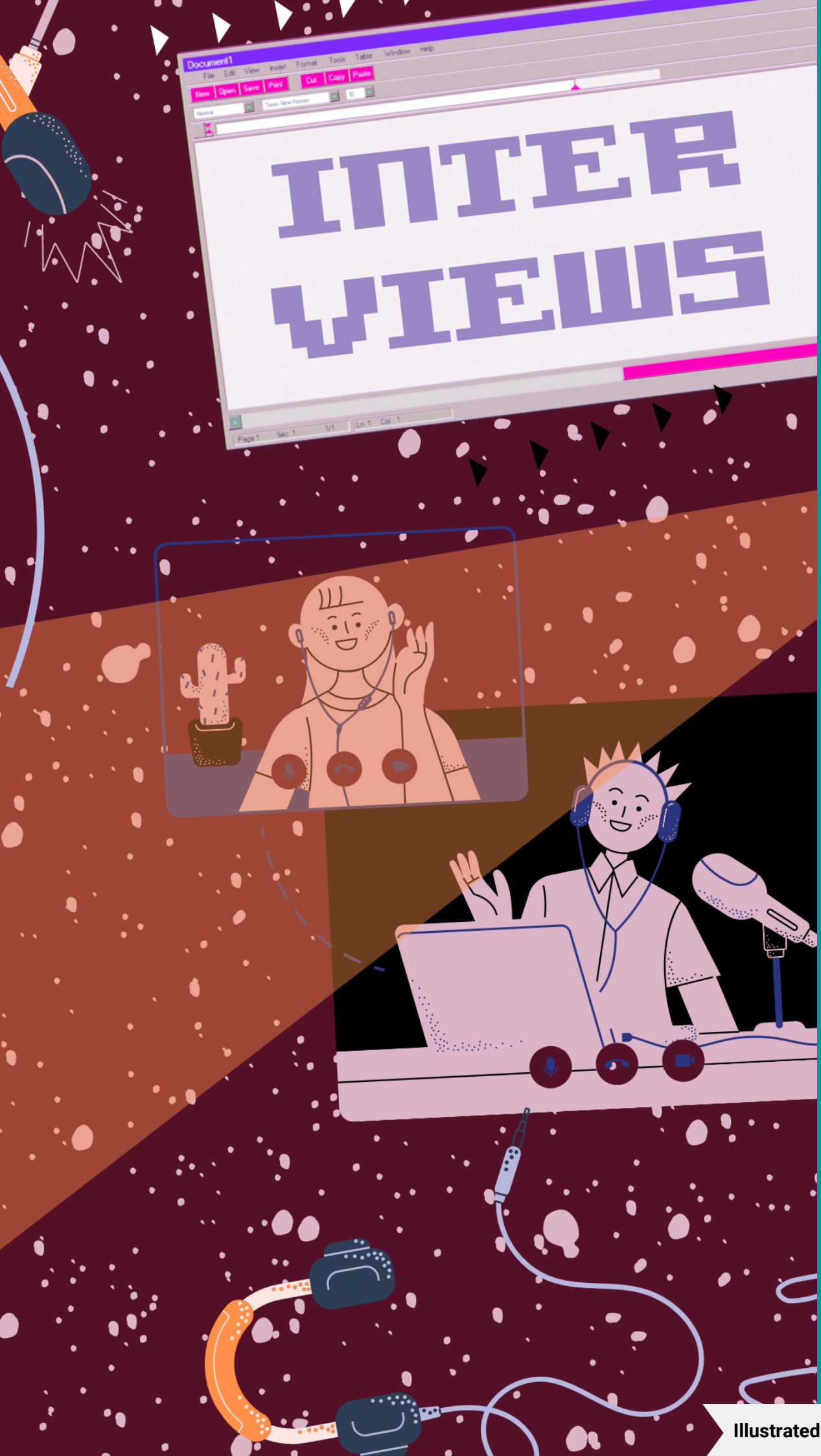


Illustrated by Divyanshi Mohanty

INTERVIEW WITH THE FOUNDERS OF 'AN INSIPID BOARD OF IDEAS' POOJA JAIN AND PAAKHI MAHESHWARI

INTERVIEWED BY **SAMANTHA LUCILLE NATIVIDAD**

After discovering the lack of blogs solely dedicated to literature on social issues, Pooja Jain and Paakhi Maheshwari worked together to launch An Insipid Board of Ideas. As a non-profit storytelling organization that works to spread awareness through literature, they have helped people recognize that awareness is bliss, not ignorance. Over the past year, they have published over 50 stories, held photography contests, collaborated with numerous international organizations, and reached 21,000 people.

What are some challenges you have faced since you first started working on An Insipid Board?

Paakhi: In the beginning, we had very few team members. In consequence, a lot of times, we had to design, post and write. Sometimes, we were a two-woman army, especially because all our team members are students who often get occupied with their academics. Pushing through, though, wasn't difficult. Pooja and I are compatible that way: we divide the work between us and don't let ourselves burn out. After all, IBI is close to our hearts, and we do everything to keep it going.

Pooja: Also, both of us being full-time students, we had our exams at the same time, so it became difficult to keep our ship sailing. Those times, we had no other option but to take a break from Insipid, and we had to stop functioning for a few weeks. This slump affected our followers on social media and our website visits. But again, every time, we picked up the pace and resumed our job with even more passion.

What has been one of the most memorable events since An Insipid Board started?

Pooja: I don't have to give this question a moment of thought. It is undoubtedly meeting Paakhi through RoundPier. I could never imagine meeting such a wonderful person online and becoming such good friends with her over time. Paakhi and I have a very comfortable and understanding relationship. Though I haven't even met her yet, she always gives me that safe space to share and communicate. I have always felt so comfortable sharing my highs and lows with her. Also, she is supremely intelligent. So, every time I struggle with a math question, I know she can help me, and without a second thought, I call or text her.

Paakhi: I literally can't trump that. I feel so happy and appreciated. But, from the organization's point of view, the favorite memory would certainly be when we launched our Pride Series. Getting so many positive responses through comments and DMs motivated us to deliver better content. I remember when we got comments from people on our stories: “A Tomboy Like Me” and “A Love that Love”, saying that they felt represented and even commented how they faced problems with their identities! We reached over 2,000 people with that series alone and it made us realize how many people are still closeted because they're afraid to be recognized as who they are. Constantly, , and the response we gained in Pride month gave us a newfound confidence.

> **We aim to destigmatize and inform through our stories**

What are your thoughts on the milestones you've accomplished as well as any future plans you have?

Paakhi: We just completed our first year at IBI on August 1st, and to celebrate the same, I calculated our reach and discovered how many people we impacted. Seeing that big of a number, I felt so proud and amazed. I looked back at all our achievements - whether that be our collaborations, contest, or story series - and I realized that we actually took a step towards our goal of making people aware. All our efforts made a real difference in society.

Pooja: As we are moving forward, we also have plans to expand our organization into poetry. We aim to have over 50 team members in our family this year, so we are on the lookout for people who are determined to make a difference and give back to society through writing and designing.

What is it like to be founders of such an impacting blog, especially when you're just a student?

Paakhi: Apart from newer connections, the added college stress, and a new perspective of society, I am the same person I was a year back. Being a founder at Insipid Board is a triumph, and managing our talented team feels so empowering. Though my social circle still sees me as the published novelist and not the Founder at IBI, I feel motivated to make our organization known for its articulate content.

Pooja: 'Founder @insipidboard' is the first impression that I have on people I meet these days. It is motivating to see DMs of friends giving positive feedback and applauding the quality of the stories we publish. It is so good to know that people notice Insipid. More than that, people in my social circle recognize it positively. It fills me with immense joy to know that I am impacting society.

AWARENESS IS BLISS

An Insipid Board of Ideas

To the RoundPier community:

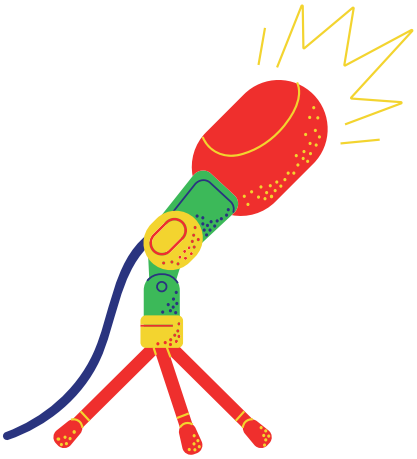
Pooja: RoundPier had a very active role in our organization's initial expansion. To see teenagers of my age leading so passionately at RP motivated me greatly. A platform like this can really bring out the best in us... To go out there, interact with teenagers and leaders of my age, and associate myself with a social cause by volunteering for it!

Paakhi: RoundPier was my key to Insipid Board. If it was not for RoundPier, I would never have seen Pooja's post looking for co-founders, and hence, lead such an inspiring organization. I would never have found such an amazing friend in Pooja. Staying active on RoundPier and constantly searching for opportunities that resonate with you is important. It exposes you to so many facets of the student community, and it helps you gain connections that will help you in your journey to success.

https://www.insipidboard.org/

INTERVIEW WITH STEM TALKS PODCAST HOST BHAVIKA CHOUDHARY

INTERVIEWED BY **THOKALA MANASWINI**



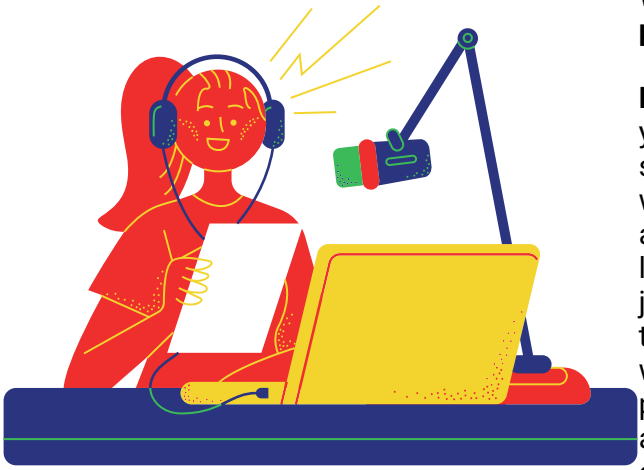
What motivated you to start the STEM Talks podcast?

Bhavika: Growing up, I was a big fan of Wikipedia and podcasts. Wikipedia just about answered all my questions and provided me with all the information I needed. I was also a big STEM enthusiast. I searched on google for STEM podcasts but all I could find were conversations between eminent personalities or guests. I couldn't find a podcast that spoke about STEM topics. This highly motivated me to start a podcast with my friend Prakriti who was also interested in those subjects. Moreover, I didn't want another STEM enthusiast to be disappointed like I was because they can't find any podcasts that resonate with the topics they want to learn about.

Is there any advice that you would like to give to your podcast listeners or to people who are interested in STEM?

Bhavika: Many people tell themselves that because they like this particular thing or subject, they will stick to it and not explore other possibilities. I completely disagree with that. I would advise people to keep their options open to new subjects. Never limit yourself to a particular thing. Always be keen to learn new things and explore the wide range of possibilities. On the other hand, STEM isn't a subject that you can study only for exams, it deals with phenomenons that happen every day. Most of the things surrounding us right now involve STEM in some way or another.

> "Always be keen to learn new things and explore the wide range of possibilities"



What suggestions would you give people that want to start a podcast?

Bhavika: Do it only if you love it. Know what you are getting yourself into because hosting a podcast might seem easy on the surface but really isn't. When my friend and I started STEM Talks, we didn't know that hosting a podcast would be time consuming and take a lot of effort, but we didn't stop doing it because we loved every part of the process. Some people start a podcast just for the sake of it or for their college resume, and eventually they get tired of it and stop doing it. Start a podcast if you are willing to take the time out of your schedule. I would suggest people to research and explore the ideas they're passionate about, but the most important thing is to add your own unique element to it.

INTERVIEW WITH THE FOUNDERS OF QUARANTEEN MUSIC LESSONS MARYLAND SENIORS KELSEY NJEMBU AND BLYTHE MCCAMON

INTERVIEWED BY **SAMANTHA LUCILLE NATIVIDAD**

Quaranteen Music Lessons

While many find it easy to learn music or be involved with the fine arts, there exists a hidden minority of individuals who aren't able to afford or access such opportunities. However, in an effort to bring about change and hope to those who wish to learn music but can't, Maryland seniors Kelsey Njembu and Blythe McCamon founded Quaranteen Music Lessons (QML) to provide affordable music education and inspire youth to pursue their musical passion. Through an entirely online format, they are able to reach students internationally from countries such as Brazil, Kuwait, and India.

The Prelude

Blythe: Where we live, it's often hard to find ways to learn music. There's not a lot of opportunities, and when there are, they're oftentimes super expensive. We both had those experiences of missing out because opportunities are pricey, so we wanted to make something that provides a way for people to get music, education and opportunities for free.

Kelsey: When we started, it was just us. We wanted to teach violin lessons to kids in our county, but we never thought of starting a whole organization. We didn't want to partner with any stores or charge our students like the county wanted us to, so we decided to break away from them and teach on our own. It was definitely a big learning process of what we really wanted though. We knew we wanted to give free music lessons and help people who didn't have the money to get involved. We found others creating new organizations and founded our own. After opening our Instagram and getting new executive team members, we soon got to where we are now. Our team was one of the biggest parts of the process and the two of us are truly thankful for them helping us realize our full potential.

> " The international aspect and the amount of diversity we have is another thing I find really important "

A Song for Everyone to Hear

Kelsey: Especially in our community where music opportunities are already so limited because they're pricey, free music education is honestly so important. Just the fact that we're able to help kids, especially those from minorities learn music and give them an experience they usually wouldn't be able to get elsewhere is honestly amazing. The international aspect and the amount of diversity we have is another thing I find really important since we teach kids from all different demographics, and all have different values and backgrounds. Personally, as a violinist and a musician, when we have county wide or even tri-county wide events, I don't see other black women or others with the same skin color as me which discouraged me to the point that made me question myself a lot. 'Do I really belong here? Should I be doing music?'

Blythe: These kids we're teaching sometimes have the same fears as I do, but we're giving them more chances to learn music and see other kids at recitals and performances who look like them as well as those who look completely different from them. It helps us all think: Maybe I really do belong. The fact that we're helping people of color, especially youth, and inspiring them to pursue a field that is typically white dominated. What we do shows that kids can make a difference too. Adults think things like, 'Oh you're just a kid, you're just a teenager, what you do or what you think doesn't matter.' What we do and what we think actually does matter. We've been able to teach 50 plus students a week and provide them with an education they might not get elsewhere. That's something I've realized and learned along the way.

The First Recital

Kelsey: We never personally heard the students perform while they were learning under the teachers. We knew the students were definitely doing well, but hearing how much they've improved over the past few months made us really proud of both them and the teachers that helped them. It was amazing to see the progress everyone made the past year and how they were able to make music. The recital was an eye opener for us since we realized how much we've actually done and what our impact was. We didn't think, at first, that we would be able to make it this far and also if we were even going to keep up with everyone the entire year. We were always worried if our impact wasn't as great as we thought it would be, but this was definitely a successful test that showed what we've managed to do and how our students are great as well.

A Year of Learning, A Year of Success

Kelsey: The first thing I thought of when I realized we were approaching our one year anniversary was just: 'Wow.' We honestly weren't expecting it to be this big and now after a year, we're international. We get to talk to and teach all these people. It's just really surreal with how far we've come, especially with accomplishing things like getting our PVSA certifications and winning a scholarship from the Women of Color Conference to help fund our future. Just thinking about what we've managed to do despite being in the midst of a pandemic makes me proud of myself and everyone who was involved as well. In terms of our future plans, we plan to focus on expanding and getting more students while increasing our impact even further.

A Small Message

Blythe: To those who wish to start their own organizations, just do it as long as you're motivated and passionate about it. We never expected to get anywhere, but we didn't care and still did it. If you want to start music, there's no limitations. If you think you're too old, you're actually not too old. If you think you can't do it, don't let that stop you from not being able to do it.

> " What we do shows that kids can make a difference too "

https://quaranteenml.wixsite.com/official

CURRENT ISSUES

Illustrated by Divyanshi Mohanty

CURRENT ISSUES

GOLDEN CHILD SYNDROME

ARTICLE BY **SKYE CABRERA**

Although receiving a lack of attention and love as a child is harmful, the alternative is also detrimental. “Golden Child Syndrome” occurs when a child receives too much attention and love for characteristics they do not possess. This results in the child shouldering the enormous expectation of being perfect in every single aspect, without actually showing any indication of being that. Unfortunately, the child will eventually, and inevitably, have a moment of breakdown when they do not meet these expectations.

What happens when the Golden Child turns into Brass

In most (if not all) cases, the golden child will shed their layer of gold and show they are nothing but brass. Once they and the people around them notice that they are not meeting the original expectations, the golden child will feel like an imposter. They will think of themself as a failure who couldn’t achieve what was asked of them. People will pity them in public but shame them in private. “Just try harder” will be the words mumbled to them. They’ll feel the change of atmosphere from praise and love to disappointment and resentment. Was everything told to them as a child, a lie? Or have they simply failed to live up to the expectations put onto them? They’ll feel that they've failed the people who have done nothing but give them love and affection. But truthfully, have they failed them? Or have the people around them failed to realize that putting so much pressure on a child can do more harm than good? Simply put, these golden children aren’t failures, they are simply victims.

The True Gold

Though it is inevitable for the golden child to turn brass, they can still learn and become truly gold. To accept one's flaws and shortcomings is the real treasure that one should achieve in life. These golden children should learn that one doesn’t need to be made of gold, to be perfect, in order to be worthy of love and affection. They can simply be who they are and still be worthy of every good thing in the world. Failing to meet certain expectations doesn’t make them a phony or an imposter, it makes them human. Even though it might not be what was expected, no one can deny the true gold’s importance.

CURRENT ISSUES

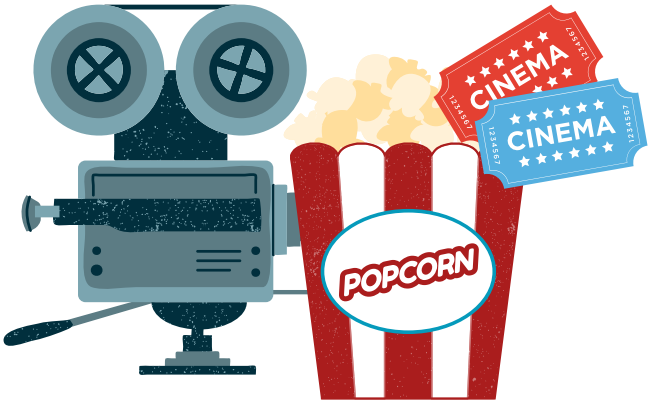
GLORIFICATION OF TOXIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

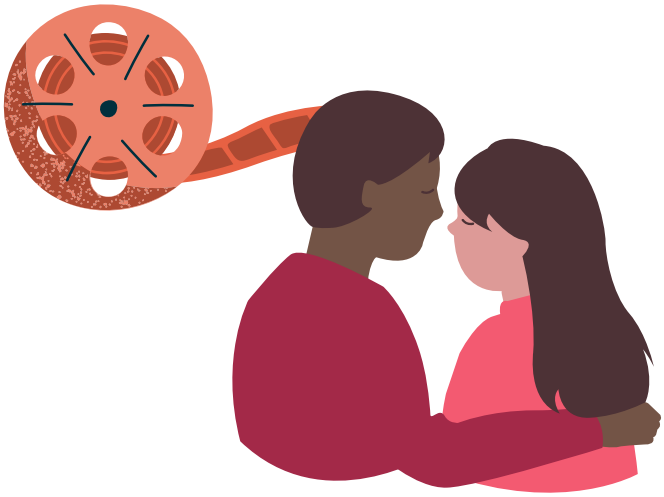
ARTICLE BY **AVISHI KHYATI**

It's a beautiful summer evening and everyone is enjoying themselves at the carnival. Noah, who finds himself attracted to Allie, decides to ask her out. Allie declines and Noah, not able to take no for an answer, decides to go for something "extreme". He dangles himself on the spokes of Allie's Ferris wheel car and states that if Allie doesn't agree to go on a date with him, he will jump off and her rejection will be the reason for his death. Allie, not wanting to be the reason for someone's death, agrees to go out with him.

If you are a rom-com enthusiast or went on a movie spree during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may recognize this scene from one of the most popular and loved movies of all time, The Notebook. I am not going to sugarcoat anything and will instead come straight to the point – the above scene is a red flag signaling the start of a toxic relationship. It is not a grand gesture that will sweep a woman off her feet, seeing a man put himself in danger just to go out on a date with her. This is public emotional manipulation making the woman feel forced to say yes out of moral conduct and guilt. The Notebook is not the only piece of art guilty of such behaviour. There is a chance of your favorite movies making it to the list - trust me.

The entertainment industry is one of the biggest, most influential industries in the world and plays a major role by leaving impressions on the audience which may affect the decisions they make in their lives. But what usually goes unnoticed is the normalizing of abusive relationships in many movies. It can be catfishing, the "bad boy" making the "naïve girl" fall in love by manipulation, or an obsessed admirer stalking the person they admire, even after being declined many



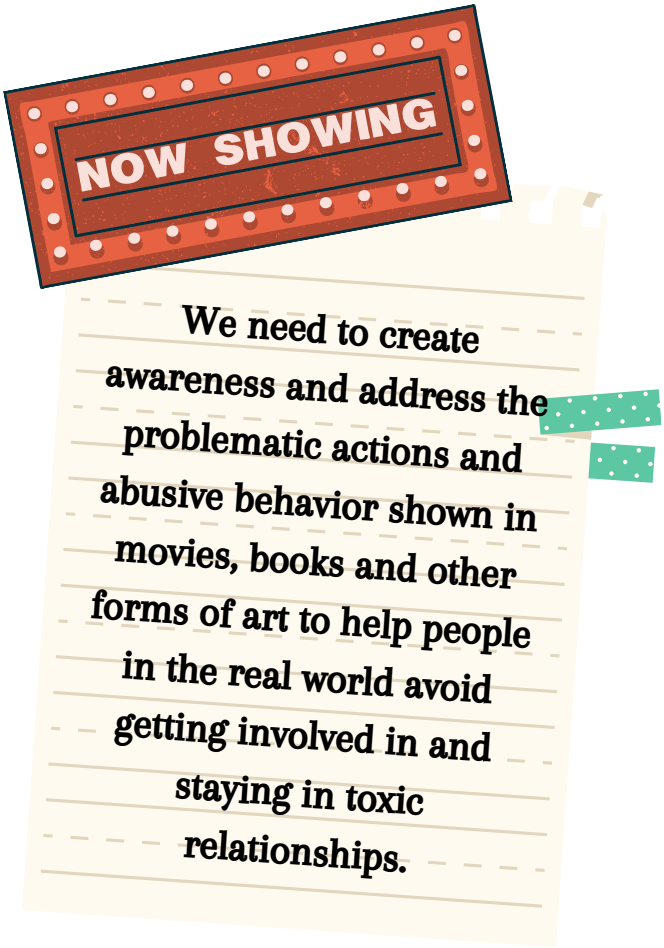


times, oftentimes giving the reason "I am not giving up on you" which can be translated to "I can't take NO for an answer, it's not good for my ego". The main problem is that several of these movies are targeted towards younger audiences who are growing and learning about different aspects of life and consequently, the problematic behavior depicted as romantic in many movies and shows is often used as a standard or inspiration for romance.

Movies such as Twilight, After, 50 Shades of Grey, and Love Actually have all been accused of feeding into such behavior. Twilight, one of the most watched movie series ever, showcases a relationship that is far from a healthy one. Stalking your partner, invading their privacy, and keeping them under control because of the excuse of "protecting" is not okay. While I do acknowledge the fact that the series is about a supernatural creature and this is purely fiction, we cannot ignore the signs of an abusive relationship and raise awareness among people that this should not be idolized in real life. Christian Grey from the movie series Fifty Shades of Grey, is regarded as the modern day Mr. Darcy. He stalks Anastasia, controls her eating habits, disrespects her personal space, tells her to not reveal things to anyone else about their relationship which shows that his behavior is controlling, manipulating and abusive. Love Actually, a Christmas classic, involves a man stalking, filming and keeping the footage of a woman without her consent. If you find this romantic and think of it as "ah, one-sided love" and "not giving up", I am afraid you need to rethink your thoughts.

In June 2020, a Polish-produced film, 365 Days, made its' debut on Netflix. (WARNING! IT IS AN ADULT FILM WITH SEVERE, TRIGGERING THEMES AND TEENAGERS SHOULD NOT WATCH IT.) The movie went viral and many articles about how problematic it was soon appeared. The male protagonist is a mafia leader and he kidnaps a woman and gives her 365 days to fall in love with him. The movie romanticizes kidnapping, physical aggressive acts, sexual assault, but uses emotional soundtracks, the sad past story of the mafia, asking for consent (even though the whole movie is about kidnapping without consent) to convince the audience to excuse the violent acts. What is worse is that the viewers who adored the movie expressed that this is something they fantasize about while watching. This perpetuates rape culture, and could trigger people who face or have faced abuse in real life.

During the process of gathering information for this article, I came across a YouTube video where a girl steps out in a short dress and is going to a party. Her boyfriend sees the dress and tells her to change it, shaming her first and then proceeding to use emotional manipulation by using soft words. The comments concerned me a lot. "I wish I had a partner who would be protective and caring like this". Well, I have news for you. The correct words are "possessive" and "controlling".



So what is the solution to this? Do we boycott all the movies and parts of the entertainment industry that perpetuate these harmful ideas? As much as this problematic side of the industry should end, that is highly unlikely to happen. Everyone likes drama, the sole purpose of the entertainment industry is to entertain us. People want to explore the sinful side, wanting a break from their normal lives and the fictional world offers that. No one would possibly want to watch a movie where a person's credit card getting declined on the first date is the only problem they face. And as long as fiction stays in fiction, we can all enjoy it. But unfortunately, this doesn't happen. There are certain boundaries that need to be respected. The fictional pieces leave an impact on the viewers and those who are not good at separating real life and fiction end up thinking that the toxic actions and decisions shown in the movie are normal and part of the journey. The evolution of a relationship is not perfect for anyone and there are a lot of ups and downs in our lives but if you see major red flags in a real person in your real life, leave.

We need to create awareness and address the problematic actions and abusive behavior shown in movies, books and other forms of art to help people in the real world avoid getting involved in and staying in toxic relationships. It can be in the form of the movie cast, production team, and/or marketing team acknowledging it in promos and interviews, a disclaimer, as well as social media posts and healthy discussions about these issues in schools.

I recommend you to watch Katie Hood's TED Talk, "The difference between healthy and unhealthy love". And the next time you get comfortable in your cozy bed and put on a film or dive into a book, learn to question and analyze the characters and scenes and definitely don't use it as a rulebook in your life if it's harmful. Look out for yourself and those around you.

CURRENT ISSUES

THE PROBLEM WITH DARK ACADEMIA

ARTICLE BY **SKYE CABRERA**

Dark academia is a well-known aesthetic that centers around classical antiquity, higher education, the pursuit of self-discovery, and a passion for learning. Most people participating have a fascination with reading/writing literature and the arts. The visual aspects come primarily from the upper-class European culture of the 19th century and American Prep. Some known fashion pieces are cardigans, blazers, plaid skirts, Oxford shoes, and clothing made of houndstooth and tweed.

This aesthetic has seen a rise in popularity since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic. It was founded with good intentions, but this aesthetic has recently been the target of many criticisms and accusations.

Elitism

From movies and books only starring characters who come from the elite to the romanticization of old money, it focuses largely on upper-class and old money culture. Therefore, it is of no surprise that it is plagued with accusations of being elitist. Though the aesthetic (and the people participating) in of itself doesn't encourage people to be elitist; it is still a problem when most of the media is romanticizing and promoting this culture that only involves rich white males.

Diversity

It is no secret that most of the dark academic books and movies are again predominately star cis-hetero white males. Movies like Dead Poets Society and Kill your Darlings and books like The Secret History, all of which are considered part of dark academia's "bible", all feature mostly white males. Though this is becoming less of an issue as people promote more diverse readings such as Noli Me Tangere by Jose Rizal, The Hour of the Star by Clarice Lispector, Don't Call Us Dead by Denez Smith, and many more.

Romanticization

Though widely known for the appreciation of learning and knowledge, dark academia also includes themes of criminality, danger, murder, and mystery. From celebrating self-destructive behaviors such as alcoholism, cigarettes, and sleep deprivation to the unhealthy romanticization of mental illnesses, it is clear that this critique has merit. This is not to say that things like this should be stigmatized but they should not be romanticized and unfortunately, some of the people in the community of dark academia are doing more than discussing it.

The Solution

These critiques of dark academia have spread and been heard. Multiple people in the community are already finding ways to fix it. Truthfully speaking, the aesthetic is not in any way "problematic" or "should be canceled", but it is like every other subculture, flawed. Like I mentioned before, dark academia itself isn't encouraging people to be elitist, racist, classist, etc. It is simply an aesthetic that promotes knowledge and the pursuit to express and know oneself. However, being open about its flaws and trying to fix it can help make it more about what it is supposed to represent. It is more than tweed jackets and coffee-stained papers, it is a way of bringing back the love for arts, books, and most importantly, the love for knowledge.

TO BE A FEMINIST

ARTICLE BY **INSHA PERVEZ**

It's the 19th century; men were thriving in every field possible; they had the entire world clenched into their fists. But what about the lives of the women living in that time? What was their position like? In those days, the word "woman" and the word "weak" were believed to be almost interchangeable. The reason for it seems to be that they only mattered in looking after the household and raising infants. The sole purpose of their existence was to be an ideal bride and mother, and to become nothing else but machines that work the way you want it to. Education for girls was ludicrous. The right to freedom, right to express their views, right to vote-- basic rights, which in today's world are considered inalienable, were some of the many things that women were deprived of.

The first wave of the feminist movement that shook the world to its core started in the 20th century. With the onset of World War I, men started getting recruited in the army and sent to the war, and women, who were previously restricted to life at home, started taking the jobs previously held by men and earning money for their families. By the time the war ended and the men came back, women had gotten accustomed to breathing the invigorating scent of freedom and liberty, and began to refuse to go back to the limitations

previously imposed upon them. For once, these distressed women spoke their mind and invigorated the public, creating a spark of hope, of light capable of illuminating the lives of millions of females all over the world and even the forthcoming generations. However, they faced humongous opposition and it would take many years before real progress was made. Yet these women never gave in, for they knew that their perseverance in fighting for equality would mean that their descendants would live in a better society, where being a woman didn't mean you were inferior.

Now that we have seen the roots of the movement, let's take a closer look and analyze the current scenario. If you were to ask a room full of people, 'What does the word "feminism" mean to you?', the room will go silent, murmurs here, indistinct chattering and giggling sounds there, because to speak up for a movement as controversial as feminism, one has to be bold. Over the course of the last couple years, this word has gone through many alterations and phases, which resulted in the emergence of misinterpretations that altered its meaning for the worse, and to add to this, the patriarchal sections of the contemporary society exploited this idea by labeling the movement as misandrist (prejudiced against men) and clichéd. The feminist ideologies aren't complex and chauvinistic, but in a situation where a woman says she is a feminist, some men get agitated and defensive as a result of negative stereotypes that have been jammed inside their heads.

What does feminism mean then?

Equality; just a simple term, but its simplicity is what makes it so dynamic and so much more powerful. This is the idea that the principles of feminism are formed around-- equality of the sexes economically, socially, politically and personally-- making it a fairly intersectional ideology. This concept doesn't give women power over others and instead gives them power over themselves, so they know that they should not be deprived of basic rights or treated unfairly. That is why a fundamental part of feminism is to eradicate any form of societal prejudice against women's rights and to highlight the oppression and deprivation women have faced in their battle for acceptance and equality.

Feminists don't hate men, but instead it is the patriarchy and misogyny in the society that they harbor. The rage and hatred is towards this system.

As we have seen from centuries past, our current society has been formed upon male-oriented ideals which fail to recognize the significance of women's social and political rights. Taking all the things into consideration, why would one deny being a feminist? But for such a concept, it is highly misconstrued.

Debunking some myths

#1 Feminists hate men and feminism is about women's supremacy.
As previously stated, feminism only wants equality, and it sure can't be achieved if the people striving for it wish to overthrow people of the other sex. Feminists don't hate men, but instead it is the patriarchy and misogyny in the society that they harbor. The rage and hatred is towards this system. The negative stereotype surely stems from people placing a lot of emphasis on "fem" so they instinctively assume that the movement is about female domination. Feminism in its true sense has no place for these kinds of radical ideas, hence women abiding by these are referred as 'Feminazis'. Many women claim to not be feminists just because they don't want to speak against anyone, or simply because stereotypes attached to this word make them fear social backlash. Just to clear the air once in for all, feminism isn't a stick to beat other women around with, it is about achieving freedom and liberation together rather than individually.

#2 Feminism is made by females so it is only confined to them. Men can't be feminists.
Feminism has always been deemed as a 'women's issue' and therefore people tend to exclude men from it. But feminism isn't a 100% female exclusive, it's main motive is to eradicate any form of orthodox thinking that might be holding the society back from progressing in regards to gender, and to take part in that fight, who you are doesn't matter. If you seek equality, stand against societal norms, and believe that women are as able and worthy as men in every aspect--there you go! you're a feminist, and there is nothing felonious in that. Being a feminist doesn't make someone any less of a man or "against all men". It isn't a war between females and males, it's standing up for what's right.

#3 All feminists are radical, wild, and unnecessarily rebellious (specifically in a way that makes them appear less feminine).
Being a feminist doesn't mean that you have to be overly extroverted or that you have to have a bold persona. Declaring feminists as angry or radical is just a means through which people try to demonize this ideology and anyone supporting it. As for femininity, it entirely depends on preference (some choose to be and some don't), this has got nothing to do with the morals of the movement. Feminists, and women in general, aren't bound to age-old beliefs about how women should live their lives. Feminists are united in the notion that we should be able to express ourselves freely, be it in the form of clothes, lifestyle, or just anything and our outward appearance is not just something that can help us get potential suitors but instead is instead a tool that we can use for personal improvement.
It is really important to understand that these are some of the myths that led to feminism being perceived the way it is today, which is gradually driving women away from this idea and highly criticizing it. Let us all go back to its roots and bring the original and true meaning of feminism back.

STEM

Illustrated by Ada Choudhry

HOW MATH HELPS CANCER RESEARCH

ARTICLE BY **ANGEL JACKSON**

Around the world, most students share the same hatred for one subject. What subject do you think that is? If you guessed math, you're right. Some students dislike math because they think it's dull and hard, but mathematics gives us an understanding of the world and prevents chaos. For example, a cancer researcher is a medical professional who studies cancer cells, how they interact with living organisms, and possible ways to stop the disease. Cancer researchers work in different settings, from academia, where they conduct basic cancer research, to laboratories, where they test drugs and vaccines through experimentation and clinical trials.

Cancer is a world-infamous human killer. Four major types of cancer treatment are surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and immunotherapy. However, the basis for these treatments lie in mathematical oncology, which is the use of mathematics in cancer research. In the study of breast cancer, mathematics played an important role. The Norton-Simon hypothesis was developed by Skipper, Schabel, and Wilcox. Richard Simon and Larry Norton are based on mathematical modeling of how cancer cells grow and how chemotherapy kills them. This modeling has changed how chemotherapy is delivered, and has improved survival rates. Math is helping researchers understand how cancer grows and how the mutated cells function. This understanding provides scientists with the tools needed to determine the best treatment options for, as a result, better treatment outcomes.

Mathematical models can predict how cancer cells grow and spread in different environments or how tumors react to various medicines. These models provide cancer biologists and clinical oncologists with powerful new methods to add to their laboratories. Scientists use complex math or geometric network algorithms to learn what patterns in data are involved and what genes or networks they may involve in the drug response. There is some hope that these algorithms will lead to new biomarker tests or more effective treatment combinations. With mathematical modeling, we can analyze intricate virtual biological systems, put them to the test, and test predictions. Analyzing complex virtual biological systems without technology takes years; It only takes weeks or months with mathematical modeling. To handle these large amounts of data from investigative methodologies, we need more advanced mathematical methods.

According to Stanford University hematologist Peter P. Lee, mathematics could help design new cancer vaccines. Calculations show that the immune system could improve by a simple vaccine given at the right time. This vaccine comprised dead patient blood leukemia cells. Mathematical models can only be as good as the data and assumptions that go into them. Researchers must confirm predictions against the results of hundreds of cancer patients.

Math is a tool for understanding real-world problems through models and dynamic behavior analysis. So, what can mathematics do? It can ease the combination of biology, physics, chemistry, and other disciplines. Even though students think math is boring and hard, it can help save patients' lives.

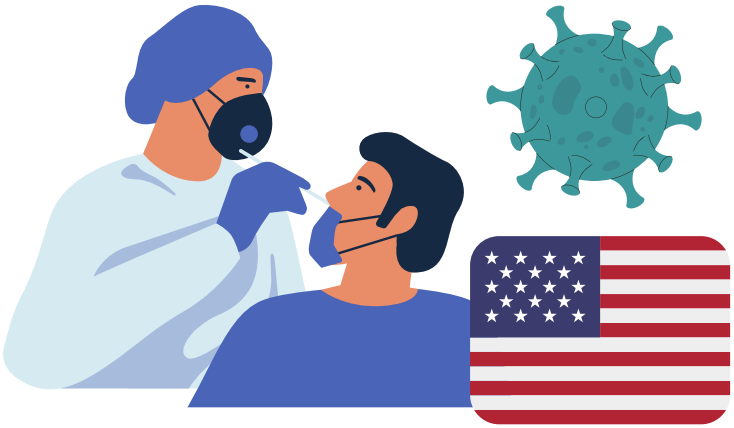
COVID-19 UPDATES IN THE UNITED STATES

ARTICLE BY **ANGEL JACKSON**

Why haven't America's vaccine skeptics received a COVID-19 shot? They might say: "They developed it way too fast." "I'm afraid of dying from the vaccines." These skeptics are just misinformed. All three vaccines have undergone extensive testing and are both safe and effective in preventing severe COVID-19. Incorporations did not develop the vaccines too fast. New vaccine technology was in development for more than a decade and was ready to go as the coronavirus spread. The new technology helps the body cells to make a harmless protein that activates immune response and antibodies to fight the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

As people felt hope about the pandemic fading into the background, there was still the possibility that new COVID-19 viral mutations may bring it back worse this time. Delta, a contagious SARS-CoV-2 virus strain, is a big concern right now. The Delta variant is affecting many children. Since the outbreak, about 4.2 million children in the United States were already diagnosed with COVID-19. The Delta variant has spread across the world and the number of pediatric cases has increased. To keep the children safe, everyone around them needs to get vaccinated. Schools will be safe if you live in a place where virus transmission is low or where vaccination rates are high.

Who is most at risk? Individuals that are not COVID-19 vaccinated are at a massive risk. In Southern and Appalachian states like Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, and West Virginia, there is a large population of unvaccinated people. Although, there is still no vaccine available for children



aged 5 to 12, the United States and several other nations have either approved or are exploring vaccines for teenagers and young children. Those who are ineligible or unvaccinated are more likely to contract some variant of COVID-19. If you are eligible for the vaccines, get them as soon as possible to lower your chance of developing any COVID-19 variant and protecting the younger ones near you.

Does the Delta strain cause you to be sicker than the original virus? Studies showed the Delta variant was twice as likely to result in hospitalization in unvaccinated individuals, but other data has shown no significant difference. Symptoms other than those associated with the initial coronavirus strain have; coughing and loss of smell are less common. There appears to be a headache, sore throat, runny nose, and fever. It's unknown whether B.1.617.2 (delta) will cause more cases. Testing conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Singapore shows that vaccinated people who become infected with Delta variant can contain as much virus in their noses as uninfected people. However, it is said that the vaccinated face less severe symptoms than the unvaccinated.

Despite vaccine protection, many vaccinated individuals can spread the delta and could cause it to increase. COVID-19 is still here; It will not leave until we have developed immunity, either by infection or vaccination.

LITERATURE

Art by Ada Choudhry

WHAT IS IT ABOUT CRIME FICTION THAT MAKES IT SO INTRIGUING?

ARTICLE BY **HAYTESHA CHHILLAR**

Psychological thrillers and crime fiction have become the most popular genres for both books and movies around the world. Of course, one can argue about a genre's popularity based on profit or the number of books published, but when it comes to basic sentiment, Crime Fiction, particularly thrillers, are way ahead in the game. This genre has captured the hearts and tickled the minds of all people, from teenagers to grownups. Some of the best psychological and crime thrillers have gone to become global legends.

People who admit to being fans of this genre frequently exhibit uncertainty. Their preoccupation with the genre makes them neurotic, and makes them doubtful as to whether something is wrong with them. That is not the case, however. Psychiatrists believe that people who read about crime have a high emphatic factor, rather than being criminally inclined.

So, what is it about psychological thrillers and criminal literature that has people so enthralled? Why do we have such an insatiable desire to learn about cold-blooded killers – moms who murder newborns, men who live lives of deception, and youngsters who are molested and grow up to be emotionless serial killers?

One of the reasons, in my opinion, is that it allows us to grapple with today's major challenges while being immersed in a work of fiction that serves as a safety net because we know it isn't true. Simply said, we learn about the darker elements of life, experiencing the adventure and the flow of emotions that come with it,

from a distance with the comfort of plugging out as and when we'd like to. We read about fictional psychopaths and bombs going off while relaxing on a cozy couch with a cup of coffee. We like the feeling of adrenaline and the nail-biting emotional rollercoaster, but at the same time knowing that we can put the book down and walk away. We are not in the midst of a real crisis, there is no one threatening us. We can live the life of a fictional hero, ducking imaginary gunshots, while being perfectly safe.

As readers and humans, we have an innate desire for answers that are only surpassed by our desire for justice. Add in our limitless want for resolution, and our psyche demands that good triumph over evil, but we live in a world that regrettably defies our expectations. We are frequently overwhelmed by world happenings when we open the daily paper or peruse online news sources. Most of us believe that events are beyond our control, from terrorists mowing down innocent people on the streets to megalomaniacs who seem to have us on the precipice of nuclear war. Taking a break from reality and immersing ourselves in crime fiction can often deliver the resolution we're looking for. It's a genre in which evil is punished and goodness triumphs most of the time.

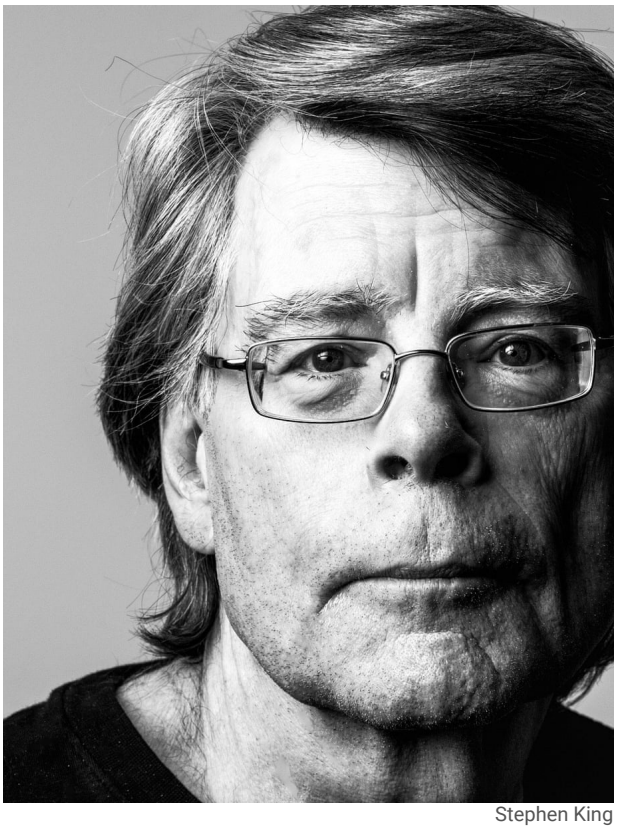
Another factor could be the need for awareness of people. It's human nature to make assumptions about why other people act the way they do. Understanding the motives of others around us is one of the abilities required for survival and threat detection. It assists us in navigating our personal and social surroundings. And crime fiction gives us a place to practice this skill. In a story, the question isn't "who did it," but "why did they do it."

However, crime isn't the only thing that draws people to this genre. It's also the manner in which a writer tells a story - the core element in a crime novel. When comparing this genre to others, you will note that every character and event must serve a purpose in order for the readers to understand each scene as the potential cause of an effect that will occur later in the story. Even if a plot turns out to be a false argument, it was purposefully placed there. Authors who are skilled at using this approach frequently succeed in preventing readers from drifting or skipping any scene.

Crime fiction provides insight into society, and as a kind of escape, it is far more realistic and gritty than other genre fiction.

Stephen King is an ideal example of an author that masterfully uses this tool. His writing style is credited with his success because many of King's three-dimensional, dynamic characters are relatable, and his stories never fail to capture and delight both long-time fans and newcomers alike. The protagonist in "Carrie," for example, is a high school student who is bullied because she is different. Almost everyone has felt the sting of peer rejection or the severe, mental ache of recurrent emotional abuse, and this ability to draw the attention of the reader at a profoundly personal level, with a captivating style of storytelling is a surefire recipe to success.

Crime fiction provides insight into society, and as a kind of escape, it is far more realistic and gritty than other genre fiction such as science fiction or fantasy. Acknowledging the relatability caused by the proximity of the plot to real life combined with the artfully crafted storytelling these narrations are chiseled with, it’s not difficult to see why people enjoy a good crime novel. While writing crime fiction is unquestionably an art form, reading and learning from it is no less so.



Stephen King
Photograph: Leemage/Corbis via Getty Images

SIX FEET UNDER

POEM BY **SHRIYA REDDY**

Smothered with jasmines, roses and tulips
Feeling low and singing the blues
The walls of the coffin close in
As death knells start to ring.

I remember all my unfinished duties
All the errands I still have to run
Goals to attain
And people to make amends.

I understand I was stubborn, superior and a stickler
I made mistakes
I let my dreams fade right before my eyes
Now I am only repenting and recalling.

I spent all my life
Searching for something else
Never appreciating what I had
Until I only had myself.

I only aspire
To learn to let go
Speak my unspeakable truth without any fear
I want to live my life.

One day I swear I am going to take my shot
With gleaming stars
The sky's the limit
But the abode of the angels awaits.

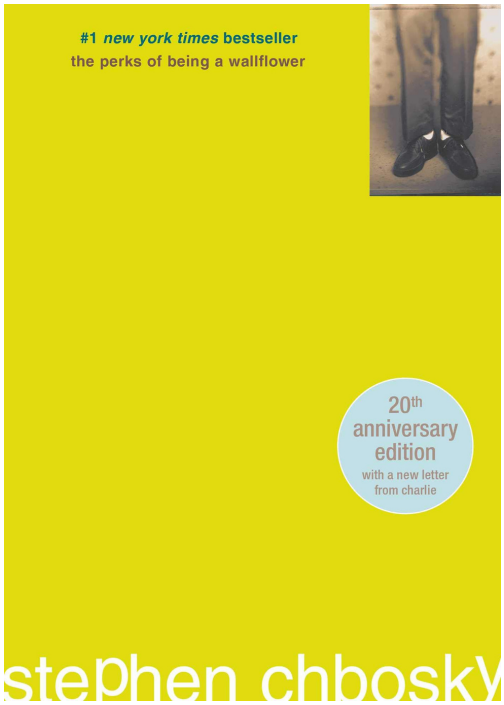
By the crack of dawn
I've got to change my doom
If only God could awaken the dead.

THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER: BOOK REVIEW

ARTICLE BY **SATYAM ADHIKARI**

"Can't just sit there and put everybody's lives ahead of yours and think that counts as love".

A real-life, captivating story that changes one's way of viewing life - The Perks Of Being A Wallflower is an absolute emotional roller coaster. The plot revolves around a fifteen-year-old boy who has a track record of overthinking even the trivial. He tells his story through letters to an anonymous reader who he thinks will listen to him and understand the troubles he has been through. He doesn't want the reader to know who he (Charlie) is and renames the people he loves for this very reason. The story starts on Charlie's first day of high school where he quickly becomes involved in a whirlwind of experiences His new friends Sam and Patrick introduce him to the world of drugs, love, The Rocky horror picture show and what it is like to feel infinite. The book talks about the most common high school topics like SATs, college applications, graduation, music, 'getting high' and other real world high school issues.



After I finished reading the perks of being a wallflower, I contemplated why this book is so outstanding. I realized it was not just the vivid characters or the spectacular quotes, it was the emotion. I could feel vicariously everything the characters felt. The book was an easy read but it had me thinking about the meaning of life more than any other. The multitude of quotes are exceptional, they're thought provoking and captivating, and that is one of the many reasons why I loved reading it.

In a nutshell, it is the journey of a traumatized boy "Charlie" who happens to encounter emotionally provocative experiences . Though his struggles are sad, they keep the readers engaged, because all of us can relate to him on some level at many instances. The Perks Of Being A Wallflower is a must read. It may not keep you on the edge of your seat but this heartwarming book will undoubtedly engulf and soothe you.

COMMON MAN'S DEJECTIONS

POEM BY **SHRIYA REDDY**

Everyday it rains
Filling lives with more pains
Making us more insane
In every moment of sugarcane.

People in penury sorrow
Because they can't take or borrow
And so, their baby boy's bone marrow
Keeps growing narrow.

Politicians in power
Make us suffer
So that it gets tougher
For the beastly coronavirus to even lay in.

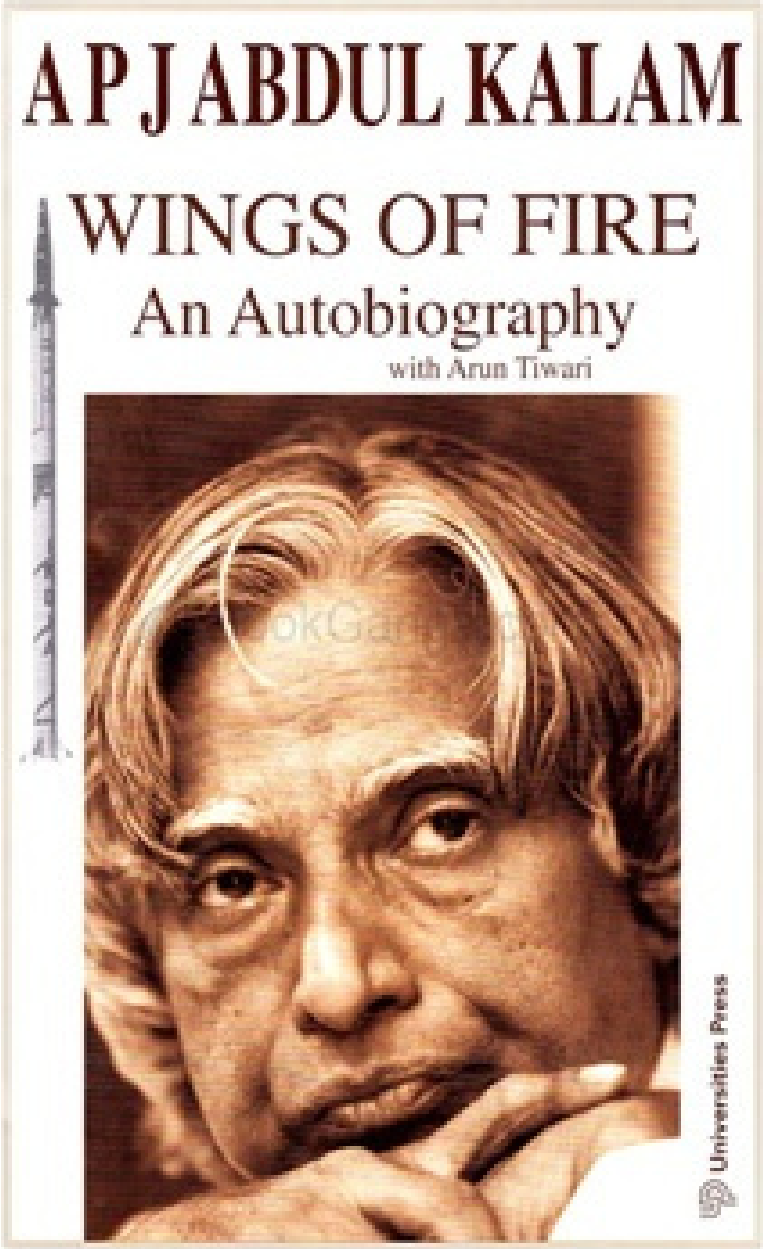
Our family members we can't see
Because we can't even pay the fee
And they kneel on their knee
Recalling their memory reel.

This is how we feel
What would you know what a common man's life is
With hope and faith, we live
Counting droplets with our hair frizz.

WINGS OF FIRE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ABDUL KALAM

ARTICLE BY **HAYTESHA CHHILLAR**

Wings of Fire is the auto-biography of India's ex President Abdul Kalam, co-authored by Arun Tiwari. This is “the narrative of Kalam who flourished from darkness into the bright sunlight, his personal and professional struggle," according to the book's description. This is also the story of independent India's quest for technological self-sufficiency and defense system sovereignty — a story that is as much about politics as it is about science. It’s about the life of Dr. Kalam, a prominent scientist, and the book has the potential to drive even the most ordinary person to develop an interest in science and technology, through the recounts of his experiences. It’s a voyage through his life, shedding light on everything ,barring his administration which had already been covered in various books before he was elected President.



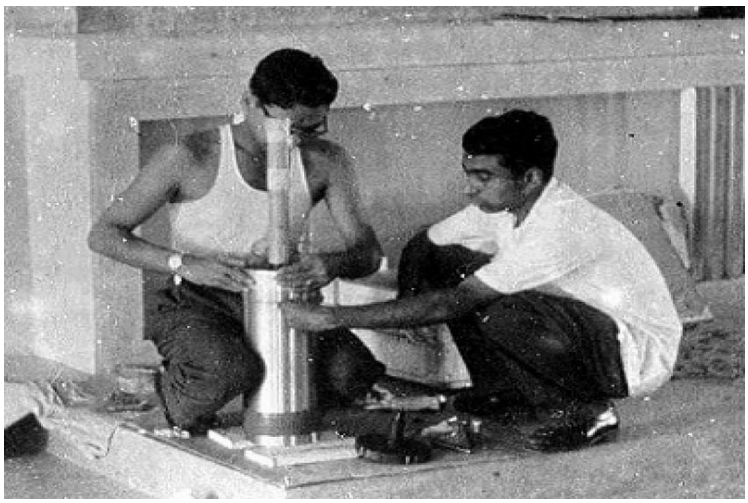
This autobiography has a balance of technical and political hurdles that Kalam encountered to succeed in its various aeronautical and space programs. It's also a triumph of Dr. Kalam's participative management methods. It provides insight into the lifestyles of Hindus and Muslims in India, their interactions with one another and with other religious communities in India.

It teaches a valuable lesson about learning from setbacks in Indian space and rocket infrastructure efforts. Being a good representation of the contribution of other scientists in shaping the future of India - the book is an engagingly informative must-read for students.

The story follows Kalam's rise from a humble lower-middle-class family and his account of India's rocketry and space technology initiatives. It highlights how basic living, dedication, strong will, and hard effort can lead to success, as well as depicting the impact of cultural unity on people's lives.

MISSILE MAN OF INDIA

The President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam addressing the Nation on the eve of Independence Day in New Delhi on Aug 14, 2005
Source: Wikimedia Commons



APJ Abdul Kalam with R. Aravamudan fixing a sounding rocket before takeoff in the 60's
Source: ISRO

The story begins with Kalam as a boy around 1930 in the village of Rameswaram where he lived with his parents and four brothers and one sister. The author of this book explains how family, relatives, friends, and society all play a part in an individual's life. Kalam described his village as a place where everyone gets along. A passage that proves the claim: "The high priest of Rameswaram temple, Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, was a very close friend of my father's. One of the most vivid memories of my early childhood is of the two men, each in his traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters."

Kalam wanted to join the Indian Airforce when he was a child, but was unable to pass the interview. Rather than being demotivated, he doubled his efforts in school, began his career at the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), and worked on the construction of a hovercraft. He joined Indian Space Research and met Vikram Sarabhai there. It depicts how a man develops into a leader as a consequence of a successful or unsuccessful project.

Considering that this book comes from a scientist, it has little scientific narration. SLVs, geo satellites, composite materials, mechanical engineering, and other related topics are spoken about crucially but in an understandable manner. Dr. APJ Kalam's lengthy and detailed project work is revealed. This extensive description of the accomplishments of Agni and other projects may bore and seem uninteresting to some readers.

It's written in plain English, and it appears as if the author is speaking directly to the reader. There are lessons throughout the text that are for everyone's grooming reasons. Abdul Kalam explains how to bring out the best in others. and these visions of his, that contributed to the laurels his country earned, he was bestowed with the title of "spiritual scientist."

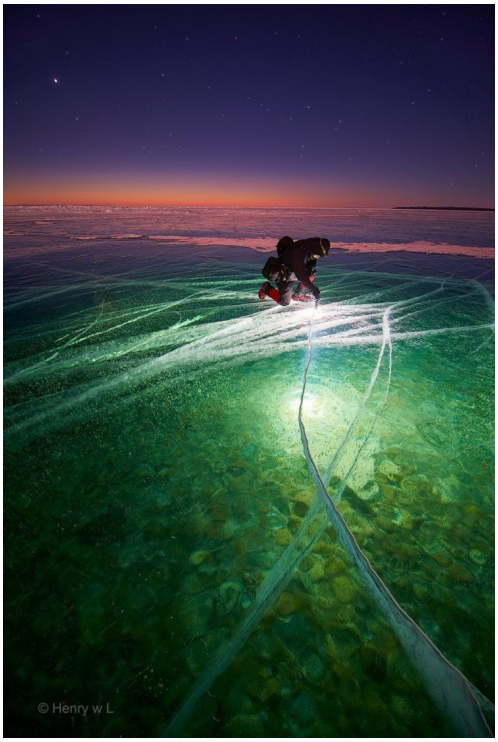
Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam's ambitious but simple living and positive attitude illustrated in the 'Wings of Fire' became an inspiration for the Indian youth. In a country divided along religious and caste lines, sullied by corrupt political systems where money reigns glory, Abdul Kalam made millions of Indian citizens proud with his genuineness and willpower.

THE CREATIVE MIND

Art by: Tanvi Tanna. Instagram: @illustratortanvi

PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN ART

ARTICLE BY **AKSHATA BHUSAL**



Since its origin, photography has had a significant impact on how people perceive and consume life. A photograph can reflect a whole societal movement or be a catalyst for change. But how exactly does a snapshot become a piece of art? Many people feel that art is divided into two categories: form and content.

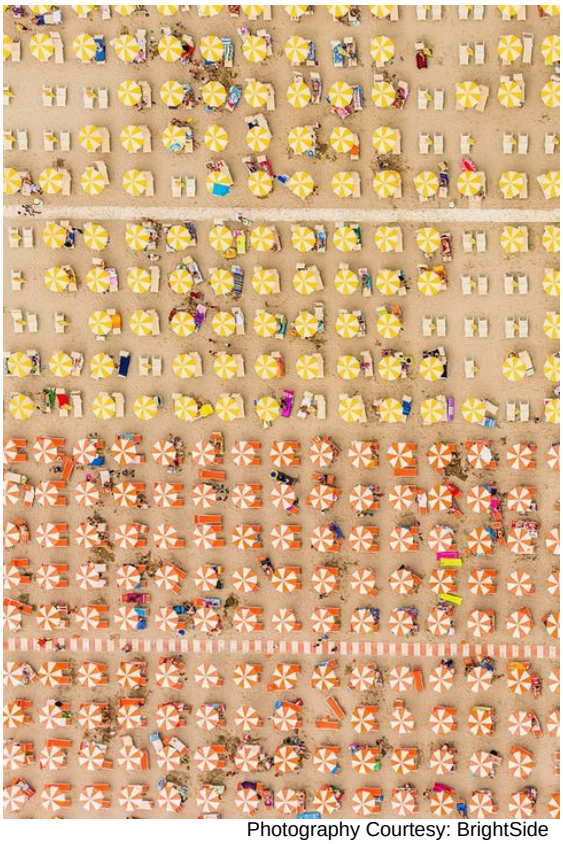
The aspects of art, such as line, shape, and color, are referred to as form. The message conveyed through it is referred to as content. Many artists regard art as a concept, believing that the concept is more essential than the product of art. Many people consider something to be art if it exemplifies the beauty of the sublime.

Photography these days has been under the spotlight as an artform. The way photography serves as a medium to convey complex messages like conventional art forms do is awe-inspiring. Before we go into the characteristics that make photography an art, it's important to analyze the interaction between the artist and the non-artist in terms of visual perception. Most people don't believe themselves to be particularly creative, and regard artistic ability to be a gift bestowed upon them at birth.

A definition for art is: “a diverse range of human activities in creating visual, auditory or performing artifacts, expressing the author's imaginative or technical skill, intended to be appreciated for their beauty or emotional power.” You can already determine that photography is an art form based on the definition above. It may not involve a skill as demanding as painting or sculpture, but the nuances of it and the will to appreciate beauty and express feelings is essential.

It's common knowledge that getting the perfect shot necessitates varied degrees of ingenuity and committed focus. These two properties are indispensable for ordinary things to be photographed and presented in a variety of ways to the public through remarkable stills.
The timing and anticipation of the little aspects is what distinguishes artistic photography from regular snapshots. Experienced photographers understand that powerful emotions are encapsulated by minute details. What really matters in a busy world are the quiet moments. The perfect smiles, the calm before the storm, the water droplets, and the sparkling eyes before the groom kisses the bride; these are some of the short-lasting moments that are coveted as every photographer’s dream shot.

Technical abilities that every photographer acquires over years of experience are required to freeze a perfect moment and preserve it forever. Only by understanding this is that you know that you don't take a photograph, you make it.



Photography Courtesy: BrightSide

HOW TO FIND YOUR ART STYLE

ARTICLE BY **PRIYANKA KARAMCHANDANI**

Art style is the manner in which an artist expresses himself. It's determined by the characteristics that describe the art work such as colour, composition, mediums, techniques etc. Style is that extra little thing you do to make your artwork unique.

Every artist has their own style which is developed throughout their life. An artist's style can change as they grow as an artist or person. It's important that everyone tries to develop their own unique style, which can only happen when they gain more experience, expand their knowledge and acquire more skills with materials.

If you are struggling with figuring out who you are as an artist and how to express yourself, here are some steps that might help you:

1.Experiment: Release expectations and just have fun. When you have a precise vision for what you want to create, you limit your perspective and create a blind spot. Sometimes you are set out to create one thing, then 'screw it up' and create something different and even more beautiful. Surprising things can happen when we become more playful and just let art happen.

2.Copy the artists you like: Do it, but with a lot of them. If you copy one particular artist, you are ripping them off. If you take partial ideas from multiple artists, you will be able to make something extraordinary. You are most likely attracted to an artist who partially stimulates your style, just make sure your style doesn't look exactly like theirs.

3.Copy the world around you: You can draw anything and everything you see. Mimic the nature, people, and towns. Study light, shadows, color and shape. Working on different things will introduce you to new perspectives and style paths.

4. Practice: If you are only imagining art in your head, it won't become reality. If you only practice once a blue moon, you won't see much progress. You have to practice to improve.

5.Step out of your comfort zone: Push your skills. Draw with your non-dominant hand. Study various subjects. Work big. Explore loose and fast sketching. If you are not satisfied with what you are doing right now, then practice as many skills as you can. You have to push yourself in different directions to find out which ones you like.

6.Remember that it takes time: Being an artist is not just a career or a hobby, it's a lifestyle. There might be days when you feel like giving up. My advice to you - NEVER GIVE UP. You are almost there. Give it some time and it will be worth it.

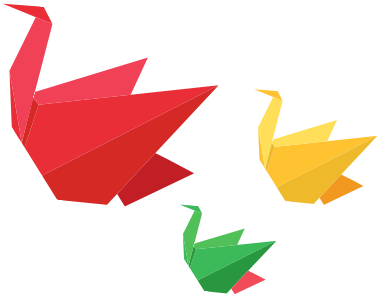
CREATIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME

ARTICLE BY **AKSHATA BHUSAL**

Tie-dye an outfit

This approach is wonderful for creating a batik-style design on your fabrics before sewing them, or for giving an old T-shirt in your closet some nostalgic flair. This method is great for producing a batik-style design on your fabrics before stitching them, or for adding a nostalgic touch to an old T-shirt in your closet. Folding the material into a design and attaching it with thread or rubber bands is how tie-dyeing is done.

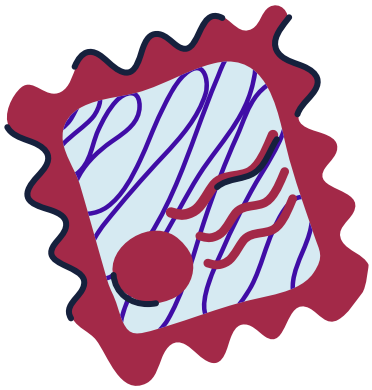
Try Origami



Origami is a fun, low-cost activity that may be shared with others. It uses only folds and creases to transform a plain, flat sheet of paper into a three-dimensional sculpture. With practice and care, origami can be a rewarding pastime, whether you're trying to impress others, or just searching for an inexpensive way to decorate your dorm room.

Make jewelry

Jewelry creation as a pastime can be as expensive or as affordable as you want it to be, depending on the type of jewelry you want to make-from simple wire jewelry to sophisticated metal and precious stone pieces. Stringing beads, making knots, and twisting wire is a meditative process that requires time and skill, as well as a few basic methods. You'll also need certain particular equipment.



Make some wall art

With your own two hands, you can create paintings, mosaics, and silhouettes. Although it may appear scary, there are many DIY paintings, needlework pieces, and abstract artwork that aren't as difficult to produce as you might think and can create a creative wall in your house.

Try knitting

Knitting is a fabric-making technique that uses a continuous yarn or combination of yarns to create a series of interlocking loops. It's a relaxing, rewarding activity in which you create beautiful, useful objects with your own two hands. It's easy to pick up, and the variety of patterns and techniques ensures that you'll never get bored! This activity allows you to make almost anything out of a few knitting needles and enough yarn to complete the task.

CARAMEL APPLES RECIPE

RECIPE BY **PRIYANKA KARAMCHANDANI**

INGREDIENTS

- 8 green apples
- 8 chopsticks
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 2 spoons vanilla extract

Bring a large saucepan of water and dip the apples for a few seconds, then dry them with paper towels to remove any wax from the peels. Make sure you remove all the wax otherwise the caramel will slide off. Set the apples aside after this.

When they are completely cool, insert a wooden chopstick firmly into the bottom to be used as a handle. At the same time, line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Now for the caramel syrup, stir butter, brown sugar, corn syrup, and sweetened condensed milk together in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, and reduce heat to medium. Cook until a candy thermometer reads 248 degrees F (120 degrees C), 25 to 30 minutes; stir constantly to prevent burning. A teaspoon of the syrup, dropped in a glass of cold water, should form a firm ball. When this happens, remove the caramel from heat and stir in vanilla extract.

Quickly dip each apple into the hot caramel to completely coat the apple and about 1/2 inch of the wooden handle. Then sprinkle the apples with any desired toppings while it's still hot. Just be cautious in this part, as caramel is very hot, and could lead to burns.

Voila! Your caramel apples are ready. Perfect for every occasion.

PERSONAL ESSAY: ONE BIZZARE DRAWING

ARTICLE BY **SATYAM ADHIKARI**

I was about nine when my father, ''Baba'' as I call him, left for work before dawn and came back after I'd slipped into a blissful midnight dream. But on one peculiar morning as I walked into his room, my eyes still shrouded with sleep, I encountered a very unfamiliar scene; Baba mounted on the desk with his laptop, the veins in his temples pulsing. It was very odd for him to be home.

I looked up at the laptop-screen. Baba was too focused to notice me creeping up to him.

I was met with a bizarre combination of the letter ''t'' and the inverted Nepali ''७''. Then, Baba cautiously drew each stroke to replicate this bizarre character on an old notebook of mine, and enunciated the vowel ''aa''.

''Baba! What you doin'? What's this drawing? Why're you home?'' The curiosity teeming within me caused this frantic bombard of questions.

Following my intrigued nature was his classic reply of ''Go play somewhere else. I'm doing something important! ''. So, I just moved on with my day.

Since then, I'd see him home way too often, most of the time glued to his desk. Me, being the disciplined-child I was, didn't bother him for the first few days. Until after a long time I made my way to my baba and the laptop that riveted him so much, along with my little notebook and chewed-up pencil. Baba clicked on a video, "Japanese Alphabet for Beginners" the title read.

We had Japanese relatives. And I'd overheard my mom talking about them coming for a visit. So, my nine-year-old brain instantly concluded that it was their visit that prompted Baba's sudden inclination towards learning Japanese.

''Well then... I too will learn it and surprise them!'', I remember thinking. I enthusiastically watched the whole video with Baba and learned that the weird drawing i watched him draw on my notebook was the first letter of the Japanese-syllabary: ''あ''. The memory of first writing this myself with my small clumsy hands is still lucid.

A 't' and a 'ulto saat i.e inverted seven", I mumbled as I wrote. Baba let out a chuckle. And Voila! There it was. My first Japanese letter smiling back at me. This was the start of an amazing journey with language learning that I had never imagined I'd take on.

I remember squealing with joy when I successfully read the Japanese-label on a friend's Eraser. Each new word I learned, each sentence I made pumped me with joy. Finally when my relatives came, I accomplished my goal of surprising them. I can still clearly recall the dropped-jaw, the loud "Nani?" or "What?" in Japanese, followed by the warm thankful smile of the Grandpa and the instant connection I had with him when we first interacted in Japanese. '"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." Nelson Mandela once said. It was indeed true. And it is this very connection that still stokes my passion for language-learning.

My happy bubble burst on a gloomy day at the airport. My dad, unlike me, didn't learn Japanese with the intent of surprising our relatives. My mom was there with me and my brother in each hand struggling to hold back her tears. All of our aunts, uncles, cousins gathered. Baba stood there expressionless, holding two giant suitcases. "Take care…", he said, with a lump in his throat, as he walked away into the departure terminal.

He was going to Japan to work there for the next few years. Apparently, a Masters Degree and a job as a teacher in this country wasn't enough for us to live contentedly. Him learning Japanese was for this reason. Dumbfounded at the naivety of my previous assumption mixed with the sorrow of Baba leaving, I cried. It was heartbreaking.

But something good did come out of this predicament. My then new-found passion is now a refined skill as I proudly say I speak 7 languages. Maybe there was a silver lining to that fine morning with Baba and my assumption that followed.

And Voila! There it was. My first Japanese letter smiling back at me. This was the start of an amazing journey with language learning that I had never imagined I'd take on.

SPEECH: ALONG THE JOURNEY

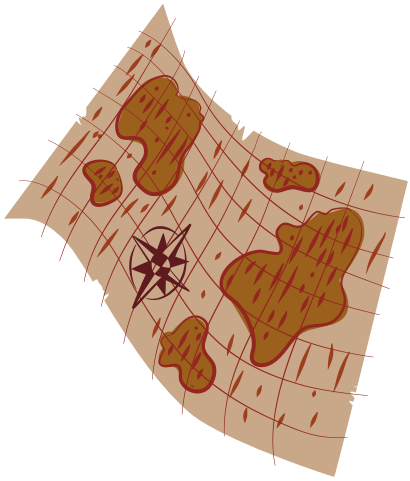
SPEECH BY **ADA CHOUDHRY**

When I was kindly awarded the opportunity to orate a speech about purposeful travel, my mind wandered to mull over memories wrapped around planned expeditions. For many, travel is a means to escape the mundane realities of daily routine. Instead of a voyage, travel becomes a snatch of retreat. For such people, travel appears as a breath of fresh air out of the staleness of myriad responsibilities imposed upon them and they desperately grab the opportunity, only to retreat into the comfort of a hotel room.
The truth is that people with such an outlook are fleeing, not travelling.
While I strongly stand beside the proverb, "Variety is the spice of life", I feel that many people ignore the benefits that comes with planned educational trips, for fear that it may be unstimulating and boring. They could not be more wrong. They are unaware of the thrill of exploring a forgotten culture, mapping your way along the corridors of history to uncover buried secrets.

Cultural trips can do more than just exhilarate. It allows a person to step out of the practices and social norms that they were brought up in and see the world as their ancestors had. When I walked along the ramparts of Kumbhalgarh Kila, a fortress tucked in the range of Aravalli Hills near the bustling city of Udaipur, my eyes traced over the horizon and the lush landscape surrounding the stone castle.

The truth is that people with such an outlook are fleeing, not travelling.

Behind me, the group of people surrounding the guide murmured over the history of the structure we stood upon. The travel brochure in my hand described the place as one of the largest boundary walls in the world. But when I closed my eyes, I could imagine among the hushed whispers, the thrum of horses' hooves clattering against the stone floors as the cavalry marched towards the call of war, a scarlet flag whirling in the wind and the hoot of war bugle summoning the soldiers to attention. My hands rubbed over the rough boundary stone and could imagine a soldier keeping watch behind the battlement, bow stretched and eyes narrowed for any sign of movement.



As we moved on to the next heritage, I discarded the brochure for facts could not account for the experience of being present among the structures that kept secrets of the lives they supported. We stopped in front of the doorway that showed the room of the maharani and her maids. The intricate carvings on the wall told the stories of their beliefs, gods and ancestors. A rope was tied across the threshold, so that our presence would not alter the preserved history.

The women would have looked over the kingdom from the window, patiently waiting for their husbands and sons to return home. I could feel the weight of the high standard of morals imposed on Rajputs as I stood before the battle shields, swords and armour. I could see my reflection in the smudged metal and it seemed to be challenging one's mortality. The other tourists could feel it as well for they stood mutely and their chatter had died down. I stepped away from the showcase with my heartbeat quickening as if almost afraid of the scenes it represented.

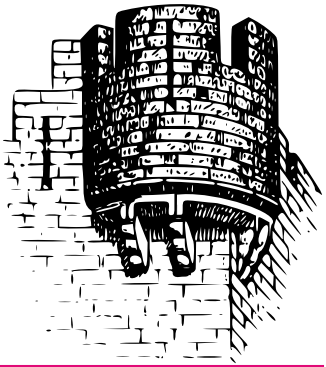
Under the mirror ceiling of the durbar room, I could see my image distorted into numerous splendid shapes. I acknowledged the beauty that had stood the test of time but realized something much more profound. Time always moves on. The corridors that were once adorned by the presence of kings and queens were being traversed, centuries later, by millennials like me.

Though the pictures of battles had sparked a response of fear, I realized that there is only one way to face life's challenges. Bravely, like the Rajputs had.

The high walls of their magnanimous forts stood testament of their might, power and struggle that had seemed to seep into the soils of Rajasthan. Though I am sure that I will not face the great odds the Maharajas once faced, I pledged to myself to instill courage in my outlook when faced with testing circumstances. I went into my trip like a curious girl with wonder awaiting eyes and returned humbled with the virtues that ruled the days of Rajputs.

Though the destination was planned, it took me across a journey through centuries that I could not have foretold. I learned life lessons that I could not have gathered from the descriptions of the heritage sites.
I hope through my experience I have left a mark to encourage you to explore places that have been forgotten to relive the lives of remarkable men and women that were here before us.

Thank you



HIGH SCHOOL

Illustrated by Divyanshi Mohanty

ONE BLINK, ONTO THE NEXT

ARTICLE BY **ANGELA CHOI**

To incoming freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, you may wonder how you even navigated to your current grade level given these aberrant circumstances, but acclaim yourself, as you grappled with this unprecedented generation of remote learning. As for juniors, you were most likely a freshman in this virtual onset, and as for sophomores, you were most likely in your last year in middle school, anticipating the exclusive graduation and next chapter of your life. With that being said, we could believe that the pandemic is indebted to us for restraining physically invaluable and irreplaceable moments that could have enlivened our past year with more direct exchanges of smiles, laughter, and memories. In hopes of ameliorating and elevating your confidence and eagerness for the upcoming school year, here is an easygoing guidance that can welcome and accompany you into a content beginning or continuity of your high school journey.

The more experiences and steps you strive for throughout your four years, you will realize that high school itself is a blink regardless of the pandemic. Considering the eternal cycle of stress and completion from rigorous challenges, ironically speaking, it can be ridiculous to believe how this entire journey can be encapsulated into several keywords or a graduation speech. Given this mindset that everything will be alright and will eventually become amusing memories, try to be lighthearted and optimistic in most situations, which can absolutely be difficult as abrupt hassles can always ruin your day. It's normal that not everything goes like planned, and it's completely fine to not be exemplary at all times.

Sharing my personal experience as an underclassman, I recall myself being very prudent and earnest over all situations, pondering over upcoming exams and projects, which utterly shaped my mood in the present I was living in. I wasn't enjoying valuable time with my friends, which later led me to realize to not dive deep into overcomplications on the worst possibilities and alternatives that haven't even occurred yet. Remember, you have one ticket to your high school ride - limited and irreversible. All moments imply a meaning from development to realization, so be in the present!

Identifying and setting your work ethic and system is a crucial, decisive aspect for attainable academic achievement. Learn what works best for you when studying as soon as possible. In order to fulfill these academic endeavors, make sure to prepare an organized planner or a fixed mindset to not release all necessary assignments and

events even if it involves your work-and-play relationship to gear more towards your productivity on academics and/or extracurriculars. Thus, do not underestimate or overestimate your immediate capacity, as you should initially understand the limits of your bucket before supplementing it through an adamant zeal. This does not mean that you should pamper yourself until your initial goals and dreams get blurred. Instead, practice self-compassion with a fundamental and methodical long-term goal that you can thoroughly believe that you will approach one step closer everyday and arrive at your destination by the culmination of senior year.

Attending school on a daily routine with the same procedure can indeed be monotonous, but you can reinvigorate and optimize your school experience by getting adjusted to the environment. Regularly get updated on school announcements and events by following the main social media account and/or your class account, as well as reading the school newspaper.

Identifying and setting your work ethic and system is a crucial, decisive aspect for attainable academic achievement.

You don't have to forcibly seek inquisitiveness, but try out opportunities that are right in front of you or offered to you specifically. From attending Club Rush, participating in Science Fair or other cool competitions, and joining an afterschool program, you can definitely discover at least one interest from this scope of activities. By getting started in these involvements ideally in freshman year and early sophomore year, you will have more time and confirmation in deciding which activities are apt to reinforce a particular passion and which are comparatively worth eliminating. Through these commitments, it will also be more feasible to simply start conversations with teachers, classmates, and administrators on topics outside of academic material, which can foster long-lasting relationships and mentorships.

All in all, when you resume in-person school life, remind yourself that you are under a fruitful umbrella of many solidarities and headways.

HIGH SCHOOL

EXAM STRESS

ARTICLE BY **VITTALI HIMANI SAKSHI**

It's the night before the exams and you are running purely on coffee. Your eyes are strained, your brain has stopped processing and your ears can hear nothing but dead silence. While everyone in your house is dreaming and snoring, you have been running on four hours of sleep and have a chapter more to complete. You have probably started questioning yourself if you remember anything from what you studied. The atmosphere, in short, seems to be calm but it's actually very stressful. You know this feeling by heart, don't you? I guess we, as students, relate to it all very well. "The night before the exams" has always been a real test of patience, and some of us would rather enter a haunted house than experience one of these.

Exams, these monthly or annual tests which have always been tagged as the real test of life or turning point of our student lives and careers, have always been a major source of stress for many of us. Those late-night study sessions we had, the papers we scribbled on, and tears in our coffee making it salty (yikes, that's a really specific one); all of that just to get that 'A' on our sheets. We have all heard how exams are supposed to be good, as they test your knowledge and the understanding of a particular concept. But a lot of us know that the majority of exams are a test of your memory, they just check your ability to remember a topic for a longer time. Application based exams should account for more credit than they get today. Unfortunately, it will take a long time for the system to change, and would probably require us to become the system first.

So here arises a question: how do we deal with our exam stress? What are the real reasons it exists? It can be anything, starting from being under prepared for the test to peer pressure or even pressure from parents or adults.

So, we have to make sure that we are well prepared in advance. Have a set timetable and stick to it. Work on time management and remember consistency is the key. It's hard but taking a break from social media is a must during exams. A short walk or some meditation is helpful too. Having mock tests and testing yourself is always useful. Most important of all, have confidence and believe in yourself, because the truth is, you never feel fully prepared for an exam.

Remember the nights when you were studying and your mom stayed up with you all night? Or maybe a friend said, "I feel like I am going to flunk too", and you suddenly found the comfort of a thousand cushions? We may not realize it, but even teachers, guardians and peers play a considerable role in our exam prep and exam stress. So we wish to continue having them to cheer us up, support us and understand how pressuring the exam times can be and how badly we need their emotional support. Having a mindful conversation with parents, opening up to them is something really suggestible, especially during exams.

At the same time, we need to know that exams are also beneficial and necessary to some level as they are a source of motivation for us to learn and get work done, but the stress which they bring should be tackled in the right way. Having a little workload and stress is fine but making sure that we are not succumbed to this exam stress is extremely crucial. It's tough, people, it has always been, but remember, we are all in this together, we've got this and we'll surely make it somewhere!

HIGH SCHOOL

PROCRASTINATION AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

ARTICLE BY **AHENA SHIBU**

You are probably avoiding a huge to-do list at the moment, aren't you? Reading this article is perhaps not what you're supposed to be doing right now. Relax, this is just to tell you that we all do it, procrastinating.

Procrastination is the act of delaying or putting off tasks until the last minute. It is a part of the high school and college experience, and happens either because we are being distracted or because a task is not important to us, at least at that moment.

No matter how normal it seems, we need to understand and avoid procrastination, as it leads to overwhelming pressure and negative emotions, such as guilt, shame, and sadness. Goals remain unmet, and precious time is lost. It can, thus, gradually create a circle of low self confidence.

In this online class scenario that we are currently facing, procrastination levels have risen even more. In online classes, the courses are self-regulated. We can independently self-organize and complete tasks without external pressure. Which seems pretty cool and all, to be ' independent', but there's always the prospect of tomorrow. We love tomorrow so much. But the irony is, tomorrow never comes.

Since we lazy humans have been facing this problem for centuries, there are many ways which allow us to avoid procrastination. Some of the alternatives are:

- Keep the phone aside while studying and turn off the notifications. We all know you don't really need it for the PDF file that your teacher sent. Even if you do need it, download your stuff and then turn that Wi-Fi/data off.
- Start assignments a week before they are actually due, so you can work on different sections each day.
- Set goals for yourself with reasonable time limits and make sure you do your work ahead of time.
- Create a dedicated quiet space where you can sit down and do your work.
- Improve your time management.
- Take help from colleagues. Research has shown that having supportive friends and other peers can boost self-confidence and make tasks seem more valuable and interesting.
- Most importantly, keep track of and don't forget to appreciate yourself for the work you have done. Take the credit pal! It increases your morale and inspires you to do more.

Studies find that higher levels of procrastination correlate with poorer academic achievement, more strongly for high school students than university students.

Conquering procrastination is not impossible. Working out on why you are procrastinating and taking necessary steps to overcome it, is the best decision you can ever make.

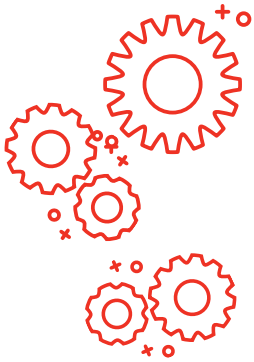
So, if you ever find yourself procrastinating things (like right now, maybe?), do yourself a favour and start working. You are the last person that wants to see you crying over an assignment an hour before the deadline, trust me. Get going, you can do it!

HIGH SCHOOL

FINDING YOUR PASSION PROJECT

ARTICLE BY **ANGELA CHOI**

When we dive into our "Why" in life, this envisioned direction we strive to pave often concentrates in the future tense, as our attitude is hoarded to potential hope and optimism, rather than inclination and execution at the moment. Thus, placing your outlooks and dreams to this present tense will pilot you to your own pioneering of a Passion Project, which all steps of trial and error stem from blueprints of your overarching goal. Taking this initiative may involve an immense degree of getting your feet wet, as it is indeed a venture that entails inner courage and acceptance of all possibilities. However, as the popular Korean drama and Netflix film, Start-Up, portrays this mindset , "Sailing off without a map", you are empowered to tackle all hindrances of your aspirations.



Getting started and navigating your implementation forwards may be the most challenging step, yet this component itself will serve as a constructive baseline of your consciousness and attachment to your identity and all encompassing values and goals.

First, discover topics and activities that you are genuinely enthusiastic and dedicated about - they do not have to pertain and align to your current extracurriculars or academics. What specifically stimulates you into action and upholds your voice? In fact, this would be an applicable time to simultaneously question the exact reasons and decisions of all your current involvements, especially for long-term commitments. It is vital to keep note that for all passion projects, your strategies that all weave towards a certain objective are concrete and auspicious for that product or service to be consequently tangible to you and others.

THROUGH SHREWDNESS AND SUCCESSES, YOU TASTE THE PHENOMENAL AND REWARDING INFLUENCES YOU HAVE SPEARHEADED.

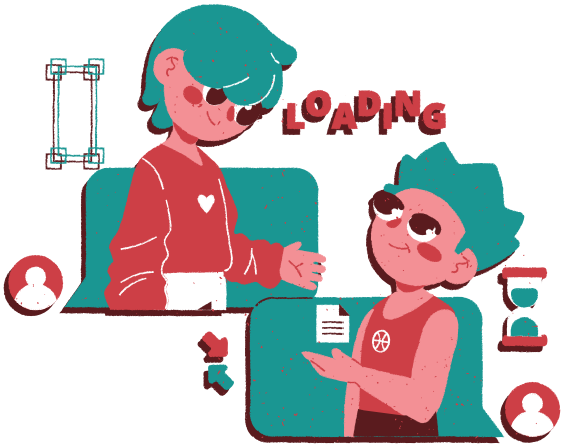
The spectrum or platform of your passion projects can be chosen under a manifold array from media publicity to research internships, and all these opportunities are attained through your own ingenuity and motivation. Becoming the founder of a non-profit organization that truly embraces and echoes your embedded values, such as rendering service and education to underprivileged groups or connecting diverse countries to the knowledge of finance, engineering, anthropology, etc, also exemplifies an impressive passion project.

The scale and pool of the project's influence are not the imperative target, as it can be impactfully prevalent in local communities based on your discernment of your region's necessities. For instance, in response to your community/city struggling from environmental degradation, you reach out to a professor or program director for landing research opportunities to augment your resourcefulness and interests in environmental science, which can ultimately prepare you to educate and induce nearby residents to collectively reuse and reduce wasteful standard products.

For attracting and disseminating your discoveries on critical topics from a state, national, and international perspective, operative creation and promotion of a website, Youtube channel, social media account, podcast, or book will all contribute to the progress of your passion project. Likewise, additional examples include utilizing analytics to perceive and elucidate gender and wealth disparities in sports and health care and interviewing immigrants combating diaspora with supported statistics and experiences through a film, which are all worthwhile passion projects that can underline distinct attributes.

Whether you fulfill the persuasion or clarification of overlooked concepts of your focused topic to the audience or be recognized from similar organizations that can prompt networks and partnerships, the conversion of your initial imagination to actual attempts and achievements will evidently demonstrate and hone readiness to your personal and academic competence.

The launching and extension of passion projects introduce you into various avenues and explorations of your character - what you genuinely cherish and pursue for the optimal achievement of your goals and values. By building this extraordinary and unique initiative, your passion project upgrades and molds your eagerness and niche into a more approachable and practical stance amid the development of your potential. Through mistakes and failures on the way, you learn to pick up the instrumental tools. Through shrewdness and successes, you taste the phenomenal and rewarding influences you have spearheaded. These worthwhile endeavors of passion projects cohesively denote your “Why”, as this inception that may have originated from your indefinite dreams and notional creativity revolutionize into solid, positive differences in the world.



WORK HARD OR SMART?

ARTICLE BY **AHENA SHIBU**

"Work smart, not hard", is a phrase that all of us heard at least once. It isn't wrong, but, I would tell you to work SMARD. It essentially combines the two words, and means achieving goals in a smarter way. Smart work is the fruit of hard work. Only when we work hard to gather and understand a particular concept, can we work efficiently to make it simpler.

Hard work makes sure that we are putting in the effort and time required to accomplish certain things, while smart work focuses on factors like: how to do a particular task, when is the right time to do it and what kind of hurdles to anticipate.

Hard workers are people who are goal-focused and believe in in-depth studying, without realising the limitation of time. Sharply administering our analytical reasoning skills, we can achieve our target in comparatively lesser time with minimal usage of resources and energy consumption. To make hard work really pay-off, it is important that we make smart decisions so we get efficient outcomes.

To work smart, it is inevitable that we work hard. It is necessary to invest massively into developing useful and practical knowledge and abilities, to work on our strengths and develop our talents to the level where they really excel. This helps us stand out from the crowd.

If one wants to be truly successful, they cannot be content by simply working smarter. The most prosperous people work smart, but they also work exceptionally hard (yes, even if they don't seem to). They maintain the same level of persistence and drive while learning ways to do things more efficiently. Hard work and smart work alone are not sufficient. They cannot be treated as mutually exclusive.

Hard work alone will not lead to your destined success. On the other hand, only smart work will also not lead to your goal. The difference between hard work and smart work is based on how you approach the task. Hard work would mean spending long hours to complete your work without any shortcuts. It definitely ensures results but the process is long and stressful. Smart work would be aiming for the same results but with planning and prioritization of tasks.

As the popular quote goes- "Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose." This quote precisely captures the essence of SMARD work, because the importance of hard work is stressed upon, and it further implies that success can only be achieved by proper planning, that is, by doing work in a smart way.

So, from friend to friend, let's start doing hard work smartly and try to achieve our unlimited potential. Let's work SMARD!

COLLEGE

Illustrated by Ada Choudhry

INTERVIEW WITH QUESTBRIDGE WINNER ALEXANDER ALVARADO-BARAHONA, A FRESHMAN AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEWED BY **VITTALI HIMANI SAKSHI**

QUESTBRIDGE
COLLEGE PARTNER

Please introduce yourself

I'm Alexander Alvarado-Barahona, and a freshman at Stanford University. Last winter I won a full ride to Stanford through a program called National Match by QuestBridge that allows low-income and/or low-opportunity students to explain their unique circumstances. Students admitted to the National Match are allowed to apply early to up to 12 schools. If you are admitted you receive a full-ride to that school. Luckily my number one choice, Stanford, chose me and I plan to study computer science because they have an excellent program!

What made you choose Stanford in particular and why did you choose CS as your major?

Beyond Stanford being a top school for Computer Science, the beautiful campus, location, and embracing community convinced me it was the right school. As for why I chose computer science, throughout high school I loved my AP Computer Science A and Principles courses and I want to keep learning CS.

Can you elaborate your journey to Stanford and how you got into along with a full ride.

When I was 8, my parents decided to open up a small grocery store in my hometown. For close to a decade I grew up working with customers, employees, and distributors at the store. Throughout this time, it was hard to work on my academics, and once I transitioned to high school I had to learn how to balance my time between both places. Luckily I learned many lessons on responsibility and diligence (not to mention patience and people skills) from the store so I was able to achieve a lot of success in my academics.

When it came time to apply to college I looked for organizations that supported low-income students, and I came across the National Match by QuestBridge that did just that. Fortunately, the National Match application is aimed at students like me that grew up with unique circumstances, and I was able to take advantage of the opportunity.

What do you think made your application stand out? and is there anything you want to change about your application?

I 100% believe that growing up working at a family business and managing to achieve excellent grades and test scores, helped me stand out the most. Right below my experience with the store would be my success with math modeling competitions where I was tasked on creating a model to predict some outcome (backed by research). I managed to qualify for an international competition (cancelled by covid), and reached the national finals of a competition in Chicago. I would not change any aspect of my application because I believe I was genuine in all of my essay's even if they may not have been the best quality.

What were some of your extracurriculars/ internships that you think helped you get into Stanford?

In my junior year, I co-founded a mental health group titled S.O.S (support our students) where I helped lead hands-on activities. S.O.S combined with 6 years of participation in a Latino youth group were my main extracurriculars. I believe competitive schools want to see dedication to an activity, and initiative. I showed initiative through the mental health group, and the latino youth group!

When should a student start applying to colleges especially when you are applying for scholarships or financial aid?

Regardless of grades, achievements, income, etc. students should begin their application EARLY (in the summer before senior year)! Even if you don't intend on applying early decision or early action to any university it takes time to develop a good application, and starting early is the best way to make sure you can receive the necessary help to make it your best work.

When it comes to scholarships you can start virtually at any time (any year of high school) but I would recommend doing smaller scholarships first so you can get some practice with writing scholarship essays. As you do more and more essays you will find out that you can reuse a lot of the elements from previous ones for different applications. After some practice I would recommend trying out large scholarships that are more competitive.

Do you have any pointers on how students can choose their essay topic and can write an impressive essay that is relevant to them?

Whenever I saw a new prompt I would write it down and brainstorm 3-5 topics that potentially answer the question. For each of those topics I would then write a sentence or two expanding on the idea. From there I could judge which idea had the most to build on, and I would start writing paragraphs. In order to make it unique to you, I recommend free writing and building out your topic of choice as much as you can. Assuming you start early, you will have plenty of time to revise and improve the language, flow, etc.

One thing I warn against is having too many people look over your essay. Everyone has a different writing style and preferences. Therefore every reader will have different ideas on how to go about expressing an idea. You do not want to be influenced too much by readers because you risk losing your voice in the essay.

How overwhelming was it in your high school life while you were applying for university and what difficulties did you face?

Finding time to write essays and look over elements of my application was the most difficult part of the process because I also had to do my class work. It wasn't possible for me to sit down for 3 or more hours and work on my application. Instead I had to spread it out throughout the week and across months to make sure I would submit my best work. My number one difficulty was finding the discipline to work consistently on improving my application. Luckily the solution was to set a time for when to work on school related assignments, and my application. This way I was able to organize myself and get more work done.

Anything you would want to say to your younger self if you had the chance?
If I had a chance to speak to a younger version of me I would tell him to take more risks and to read more! When it comes to risk, I have always been someone who plays it safe. For example, I rarely put myself on the spot. As I matured I realized that so much can be learned by putting yourself out there and being willing to talk to people and do things others may be embarrassed to do. At the end of the day others do not care whether or not I failed at something. So worrying about their opinion or reaction was not worth my time.

When it comes to reading, I wish I had read a lot more books on personal finance, motivation, business, and real-word issues. One thing high school does quite well in the U.S is assign busy work on subjects that are irrelevant to our everyday lives while ignoring topics that will impact us later in our lives. The single best thing I did my senior year was pick up the books, 4 Hour Work Week, Hustle Harder Hustle Smarter, Rich Dad Poor Dad, and I Will Teach You to be Rich. Although you may not all love non-fiction books, the books on the list are eye-openers when it comes to how we want to live our lives.

Would you like to give any tips or advice on how to survive through highschool?
The number one thing every student needs for survival in high school is discipline, plain and simple. I have gone about my school work two ways in my life. Number one: trying to do all of my work the day before it's due, and spending the days before it's due procrastinating (I know we all do it, and sometimes you cannot avoid doing things last minute). And number two: sitting down to start an assignment early and planning time for when I will work on it. This does not mean you need a calendar to create slots (although you are welcome to do that). All you need is a mental idea of "I am going to work on this every other day for 2 hours". Hold yourself to it! The interesting thing that happens when you are more organized and disciplined is that you are able to get your work done with less stress, and the quality is higher. Your grades are going to thank you, and your mental health is going to thank you.

The main counterargument to this system is the following: "how will I have time to socialize or hang out with my friends?". Interestingly it's quite simple to open up time. You can move the slots of time around easily if you are disciplined enough to hold yourself accountable. And if all else fails you can try and do things last minute, but don't make it a habit!

ALL THE WAYS TO APPLY TO COLLEGE

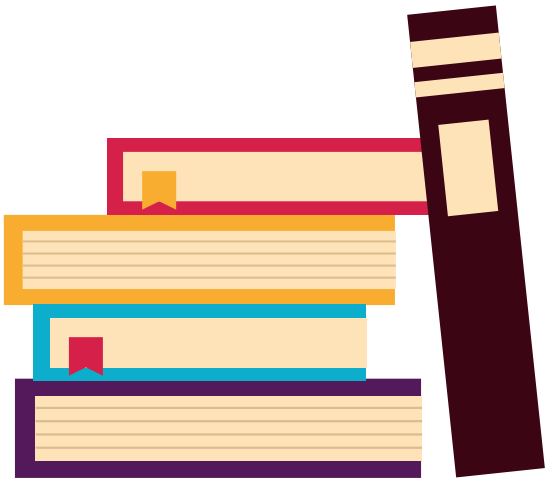
ARTICLE BY **PRAJWAL KARTHIKAYA**

While applying to college, you may hear some words like Early action or Early decision. What do these terms mean to us? In this article, let's discuss everything about these terms and what each one of them entails.

REGULAR DECISION

Regular decision is by far the most common decision of all, it's also the most competitive, as there are more applicants. The application deadline is usually in January. You will get your application update by the end of March. The regular decision allows you to apply to as many colleges as possible, as there aren't any restrictions and it's non-binding.

There are some advantages while applying during regular decisions. You have plenty of time to complete your application. You can retake the tests that you feel you could improve your scores on. It is non-restrictive. You can also perfect your essays more effectively during Regular Decision. The only disadvantage that Regular Decision has is that you have to manage your final exams preparation with these college applications.



EARLY DECISION

You should apply early decision if the college you are applying through is your first choice. This is because early action is binding. Meaning, if you get admission to the college you applied to, you are required to attend that college. There is just one exception to this binding rule, and it happens when the person doesn't get the financial aid they need to attend. Another restriction of early decision is that you are not allowed to apply to any other binding college in that stage of the application process. Some top colleges that have early decision are: Dartmout, Cornell , UPENN, Brown, Columbia, Duke, Rice, Vanderbilt, and Johns Hopkins.

EARLY ACTION

Early action is when you apply to a college before the common application process, but it's not binding, that means that if you are accepted, attending that college is up to you. Taking this route normally also means that you cannot apply to any other private US colleges early action, even though there are some expectations and it doesn't happen in public institutions. Some of those exceptions are: . Massachusetts Institute of Technology(MIT), University of Chicago, Caltech(you will not be eligible for financial aid if you apply early action), Tulane University, Case Western University, University of Richmond, Colorado College, Macalester college, Babson College, and Rhodes College.

INTERVIEW WITH EASHA NANDYALA - A STANFORD MUSICIAN

INTERVIEWED BY **ADA CHOUDHRY**

TALKING ABOUT MUSIC...

You wrote your first song when you were 12 years old. How did you go from there to releasing your first song?

A lot of what you do initially to learn a craft is based on mimicking, and getting inspiration from other artists. You have to figure out how to write a song and it takes a lot of practice and understanding of what sounds good. Once you figure it out, it's a matter of style. What do I as an artist want to say? When I was fully ready, I think I'd written almost over 200 songs and had a good understanding of what my artistry was. I released my first song, it went really well and I am grateful to have an opportunity to share my art with the world.

People assume that you blew up on TikTok overnight but they don't know the whole story. When you were making YouTube covers and they didn't reach a wider audience, did you feel discouraged?

I had a lot of faith in myself. I fully believe that if you are passionate about something, if you master your craft and you're persevering with it, you will succed. I understood, if not then, at some point my music would resonate with people. I don't know where that confidence comes from, but you really need it in a volatile career like the arts because you never know what's going to work or when it's going to happen.

Definitely not an overnight thing. The effort is compounded. People labelled it as overnight success when the reality is that you're investing and investing, putting out stuff that you've worked hours on and not getting anything in return.

When you started performing, did you feel any discrimination against yourself being an Indian American girl?

Not really. I used to go to Trenton Social. It was so funny. A 13-year-old Indian girl going to a bar and singing acoustic ballads, but the people were so welcoming. I had to analyse my own judgments of people. When you go to a bar, you're going to expect, 'Oh, these people are going to be really rowdy people.' They were genuinely the nicest and most supportive. They pushed me to keep doing it. 'Keep putting yourself out there. Keep saying what you need to say.' They would listen. My own friends from school never listen to my music. They would never go to my shows, but the strange, old and drunk people would.

I learned not to go in with any prejudgement. It's people that you don't expect that will judge you, right?. Your friends might judge you because of their own insecurity and might question, 'is that really what you want to do?'.

TALKING ABOUT PERSONAL BELIEFS...

Do you think focusing on attention and publicity makes artists less creative?

The harder you try to get attention, the less you get it because you resort to cheaper tactics. You could easily make a trendy song that will go viral on TikTok. If you look at the algorithm, see what works and doesn't, it's possible. But the goal for me is longevity and making something that resonates deeply with people. People are way smarter than artists give them credit for. They can see through who is actually doing it for the love of it and bringing something fresh to the table, versus someone who's recycling old tactics and trying to get a one hit wonder and ride off of that.

In social media, as an artist it is very easy to be kept into a box. How do you escape that mentality?

As long as I'm authentic to myself, then it's fine. My music connects with creative and independent people. I love my fans. They've been incredibly supportive. They never pressure me to be in a box and feel free to do what I want. Niches are the easier route to go but it's very dangerous.

Being an Indian American singer, it's so easy for me to be a Bollywood fusion singer. In the initial stages, it'll get a lot of views. But that's not what I'm trying to do. There has to be a point where Indian Americans are also represented in the larger context of popular music, not just a niche of it. You have to be unwavering in what you want to do and grateful for the people that are there. At the end of the day, I do this for myself.

Did you ever feel unqualified to write songs about love or felt that you had to write a certain way?

When you're younger, everyone tells you to wait till you're actually in love to talk about it. I thought it was so frustrating. Why can't I write right now? If I never told you that I've never been in love, you would have thought that this was a good song. I truly believe we're all connected. Any feeling that you have is already inside of you. It's just bringing it out. You can watch a movie and cry for an experience you've never had and feel for a character. Read a book and feel for the person, listen to sad music and just start crying. How is that possible, if you don't internally feel that emotion or don't understand that?

I'm 20 years old. If I had waited until I fell in love to write a love song, I wouldn't have written anything. I would have been sitting waiting to fall in love. I'm pretty good at putting myself in different people's shoes. I can imagine what it would be like to get your heart broken, or to be immersed in love.

Imagination and creativity. It's a good muscle to flex. I write what speaks to me. I will be able to see the difference in my work, of when I was talking about love and when I was in love. People really undermine different stages of life.

Every moment counts. Every moment is different. At every stage, you're going to be a different person. So it's so freakin important to document that, right?

The songs I wrote when I was 15 or 16, would I write them now? No. But that's also the beauty. If I had not written them, they would not have existed. The songs I'm going to write in the future don't exist yet. That doesn't mean that I'm going to wait until I'm there because it's the same thing as being like, 'Oh, I'm going to retire when I'm 60, until then, I'm not going to enjoy anything'.

Every second of life counts, every moment matters. A lot of people are going through the same thing as you, regardless of when you're talking about it. There are always going to be 15 year olds in the world. So why would you think that your opinion isn't going to resonate with people? Because you're also a 15 year old. You're also going through the same things. I never took into account if I was qualified to write this. Yes, I can write about whatever I like. It'll count, it matters. At least one person has to have felt what I'm feeling.

People undermine what young kids feel like. You're never going to be in the place you are right now. Cherish it and do not undermine your opinions and thoughts right now because they're just as important as they will be 10 years from now.

Stanford University

You started practicing music from a young age. Do you think age matters in a creative pursuit?
It does not. Don't wait for anything to happen. You should have the confidence that it's going to happen. At the same time, just do things. Just keep doing it. Keep putting stuff out there. I think I did that to an extent. I don't know if I have too many regrets. You live and you learn.

Do you think music has shaped you into the person you are today?
Oh, 100%. I can't even imagine who I would be without music because it's such a big part of the philosophy I have. I put such an emphasis on 'I want to be different than other people.' I find it so cool that I can do something that other people don't do. I can create something original for myself.

This is the importance of the arts. I have such an appreciation for human emotion and depth of feeling. No matter what you do, whether it's music, or if you're an architect, writer or a journalist, you view the world through a different lens.

Your brain is wired differently. You will never fully understand what it's like to be in somebody else's mind. Music is crazy how it shaped my life. When you hear about people's passions, you understand them so much better.

I'm really grateful for where it is right now. It is so easy to get caught up in the logistics, like how many people are streaming my music. And then you get lost from the original purpose, which is the music.

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND AND BE FORGIVING THAT YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A LOT OF BAD SONGS, BECAUSE WE'RE ALL HUMAN BEINGS. YOU HAVE TO TAKE THE EGO OUT OF IT BUT HAVE THE DISCIPLINE.

People think it's easier for creative people to do the work but not all days are the same. It's definitely not an everyday thing. You have to understand and be forgiving that you're going to have a lot of bad songs, because we're all human beings. You have to take the ego out of it but have the discipline. Creativity is definitely a muscle.

To write something honest and true, you have to live life. I go on so many walks. I watch movies with my sister and try to talk with my friends. I don't live the most interesting life per se. I think I do interesting things. Obviously, there are periods where I'm extremely bored.

If you constantly need stimulation, you will not get to the idea and fully process what you want to say. The biggest hurdle for artists nowadays is to not distract yourself constantly. That's why I love walks because I'm still doing something but I have a clear mind.

Anything else you would like to say? or tell about yourself
As a person, I'm slowly starting to learn what gives me joy. Everybody's life is different. My own goal is creating and bringing something of value to people and to make myself happy in life. Words of advice: Don't expect things because it's so much sweeter when it's unexpected. You will never get disappointed by things that don't happen.

The big thing is just keep creating, be different and enjoy life. Even if you're stressed, you can still enjoy life.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAT

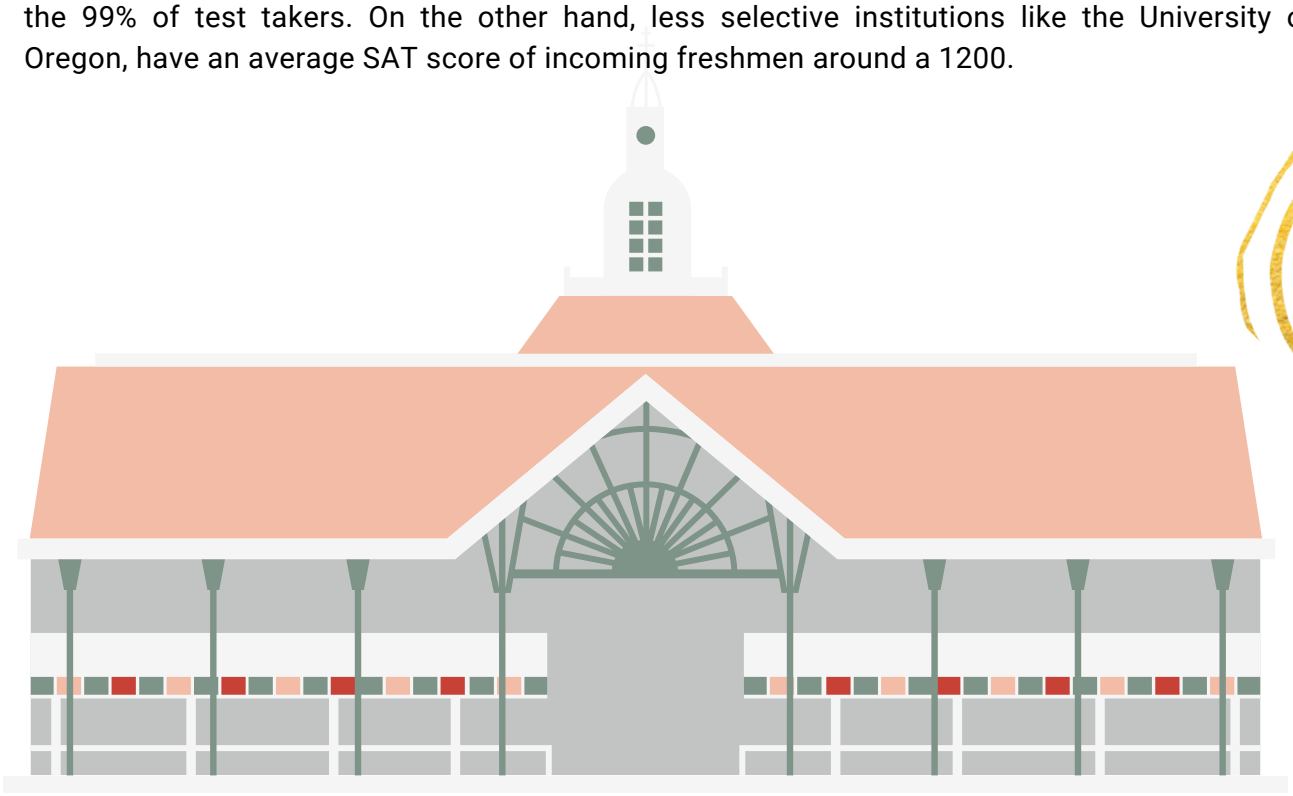
ARTICLE BY **ISHNEY AHUJA**

When it comes to determining a good SAT score for college applications we all look for a perfect answer for the score we need, but it really only depends on the student's ambitions.

The SAT, an admissions exam many colleges and universities in North America require of applicants, is administered by the College Board and scores students on a scale of 200 to 800 for various sections. Students are tested on evidence-based reading and writing, and math, with both sections worth a maximum score of 800 points each. You are also allowed to take the essay portion of the test, but it's optional and only some specific universities advise you take it, so you should look at your college list before making the decision if you will take it or not.

Some college admission workers have talked about how different students due to their background have higher or lower expectations on the test. According to Hernandez, an ex admissions officer at Dartmouth College in the state of New Hampshire, a privileged white high schooler is expected to have a higher score in the test than a teen raised in inner-city Harlem, because of their different situations and backgrounds.

The definition of a good score is ultimately tied to a prospective college student's goals. At some schools like the highly selective University of Chicago in the state of Illinois, incoming freshmen who choose to submit their SAT score average higher than a 1500 which is around the 99% of test takers. On the other hand, less selective institutions like the University of Oregon, have an average SAT score of incoming freshmen around a 1200.



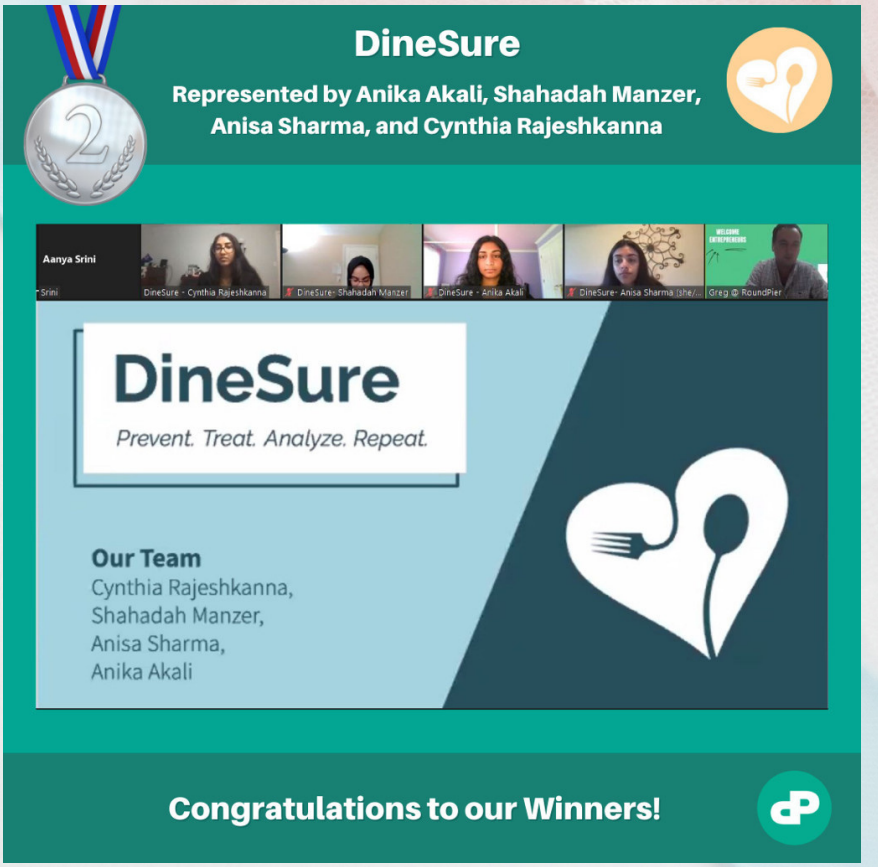
dream
hope
believe

ENTREPENEURSHIP COMPETITION

Congratulations to our winning teams as well as all of the finalists who competed in the RP Entrepreneurship & Nonprofit Competition final round!

Out of 51 teams who entered, only six (6!!) of the top pitches were selected for the final live presentations. The jury heard from each team and had a chance to better understand their idea and their go-to market plan. Check out a quick video of all the teams who entered here.

ENTREPENEURSHIP COMPETITION



Our judges hailed from CEOs, founders, and venture capitalists.

Check out our interview with Rutgers University Professor Gray Minkoff, one of the judges!

RSIP PROGRAM

Roundpier Summer Immersion Program

Thanks to our super intern extraordinaire, Alison MacLeod who championed and led the program, RoundPier welcomed the first cohort of the RoundPier Immersion Summer Program, or "RISP" for short. Out of over 250 applicants, 50 outstanding students were selected to participate from all over the world:

RoundPier Inc.

Congratulations!

Welcome everyone to the experience of the summer. We're excited to meet you! Take a glance at where your RSIP peers are from.

The Americas

Araash Ahuja
Ayesha Satpathy
Bella Yu
Julia Ding
Shreya Venkatachalam
Jennifer Lee
Shreya Enjeti
Chau Mai
Saranya Nethikunta
Melanie Samantha Gallardo
Bhavika Shekar
Vivienne Lin
Ayan Kholi
Arnav Harve
Aaryaa Moharir
Param Naik
Jana Chan
Manushi Patel
Kalena Tan
Shivani Dodamani
Jason Lee
Arfa Sahul Hameed
Aran Saini
Christopher Minn
Arushi Chauhan
Kayleigh-Ann Hernandez
Ayushi Deshmukh

Asia

Arpon Nag
Bhavika Choudhary
Divit Setia
Tilottama Barua
Juhi Ghosh
Simran Nagpal
Charchitaa Chandra
Ashay Srivastava
Nipun Chawala
Brynlee Gray
Kquehvin Gautz
Scarlett Chu
Aminta Permpoonwiwat
Kristoff John Padilla

Europe

Maxim Jamil Adegoke

Africa & Middle East

Ananya Thakur
Kayla Kessie
Sadek Mohammed
Gunaditya Singh Rathore
Esraa Mohamed
Sariyya Mammadzada
Mariam Yahia Saleem

During RSIP, students participated in weekly meetings, challenges, competitions, and workshops ranging from college applications, research opportunities, to resume writing best practices. **Check out what the RSIP class loved, what all they accomplished!**

Special congratulations to our top RSIP participants:

UPCOMING EVENTS & RESOURCES TO CHECK OUT

2022 Diamond Challenge Registration is now open!

Our partners, The Diamond Challenge, are back once again looking for awesome ideas from teams from all over the world. Check out their profile on RoundPier for more details or click image.

Please mention RoundPier!

2021 RoundPier Poetry Competition is now accepting works!

Yale Young Global Scholars application is now open!

Selected students will get to experience university life through Yale faculty lectures and small-scale seminars, all while meeting peers from around the world. Session topics include politics, economics, literature, engineering, biological sciences, and more! For details and application requirements please visit and **apply by November 3, 2021**. Please mention RoundPier!

Lumiere Education

This fall, RoundPier partner Lumiere Education is launching a program for students who are curious about artificial intelligence and its potential!No prior coding experience required.

Additional resrouces and content to check out on RoundPier:

Interview with Mikhail Troyan, Princeton University

Interview with Alyssa Rothman, Boston University

Interview with Mr. Augusto Neto about applying to UK schools

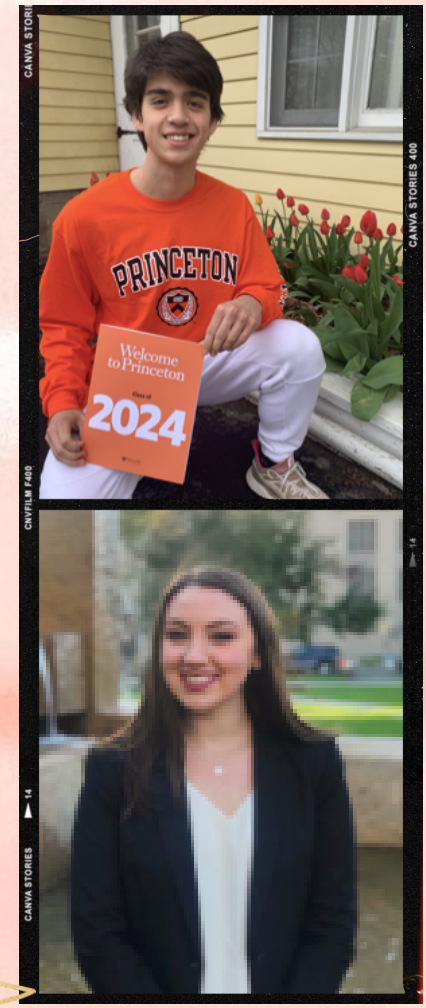
Interview with the one and only Mark Schaefer, Marketing professor & branding super star.

Free essay analysis and much more in Eduniverse.

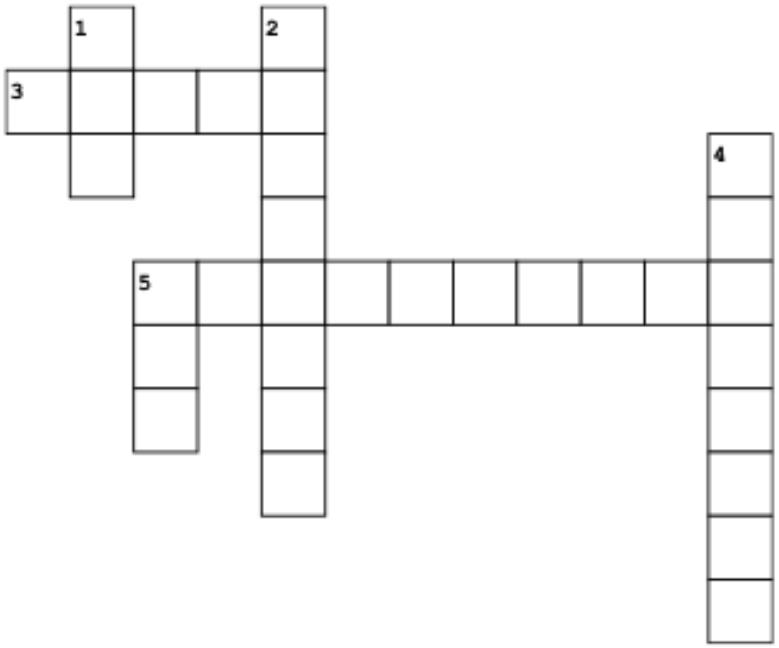
Coming soon in the next few weeks and months

- In our Groups & Clubs area, we are working on posting club content for students to work on from how to start a debate club, to projects to work on
- Investment Competition
- Environmental Competition
- ...and Script Writing Competition to name a few!

Be on the look-out on RoundPier.com or download the app and sign up four the RoundPier Digest email.



Autumn



Across

3. This tree is the official tree of Canada

5. Invented by Benjamin Russell Jr., a football player in 1926

Down

1. Flying mammal

2. This animal hibernates in the fall

4. The word fall was derived from this Latin word

5. Total categories for the Nobel Prize

May this be the season you start to notice the many subtle ways you are growing

Make yourself a priority

Life is tough but so are you

At the end of the day, we can endure much more than we think we can

Never forget how wildly capable you are

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RoundPier

Illustrated by Avishi Khyati

OCTOBER 2021 | ISSUE II

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